





SLAVEHOLDING EXAMINED

IN THE LIGHT

OF

THE HOLY BIBLE,

BY

WILLIAM HENRY BRISBANE.

~~~~~  
"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."



PUBLISHED BY

THE AM. AND FOR. ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

William Harned, Agent, No. 22, Spruce st., N. Y.

## COMMENDATORY NOTICES.

PHILADELPHIA, *Sept.* 23.

Doctor Brisbane's Bible argument is, to me, more readable and more satisfactory than any other that I have met with. The subject is discussed with a candor, clearness and force equally rare in this controversy. I did not think that the discussion could be revived with so much promise of practical good as the perusal of the Doctor's book now induces me to expect. Its spirit is manly, and style easy, while its thought is mature and its criticism acute, and its argument is conducted, throughout, in the assuring tone of a calm demonstration, without any of the tension and struggle of a difficult and doubtful dispute. It is an open, free, true book, written by an honest, capable man, who has worked his own way through the practice and prejudices of slavery, up into the liberty of his present position and opinions, in all the earnestness of great suffering and great sacrifice. He has *lived* through every stage of his argument, and in a very successful piece of authorship has produced a book, which is well calculated to spread its truths and circulate itself wherever it is most needed.

WILLIAM ELDER.

---

NORRISTOWN, PA., *Aug.* 8, 1847.

I have very recently examined, with attention, a manuscript of Dr. William Henry Brisbane's, discussing every passage in the Bible, that has heretofore been adduced in support of slavery. Dr. B. defines Slavery as follows: "Slavery is that condition in which one is in the power of another whom he is compelled to serve without the means of redress when wronged," and then rigorously compares this definition with the Scriptures, and shows to a demonstration, as it appears to me, that the Bible not only withholds its sanction from such a relation, but imposes upon it the most fearful condemnation. He proves also, that there is no word in the sacred writings that is equivalent to "slave" or "slavery."

I hope that Bro. Brisbane will print this little book, which, for clear statement and conclusive argument, is unsurpassed by any thing I ever read. It makes no display of learning, but shows a vast amount of thinking, and will, I firmly believe, make many a thoughtful and candid reader, whether learned or unlearned, feel surprised, if not ashamed, that conclusions so naturally flowing from the text had not occurred to him before.

SAMUEL AARON.



BELLEVILLE, Aug. 18, 1847.

*My Dear Sir* :—The evening that you left us, I wrote to Mr. L. Tappan, giving him our views of your Bible argument as he requested, which was, substantially,—1. That its spirit is *admirable*. 2. That its brevity, simplicity, clearness, compact logic, freedom from ambitious pretence of scholarship—its easy, natural flow of common sense, stampd throughout with independent thought and critical acumen, combined with its rare candor, calmness and courtesy—entitle it to a wide dissemination, and will secure for its words of truth and soberness large audience and earnest pondering.

I have just read the above to my wife and to her sister, Sarah M. Grimke—who are now detained by company—and they beg me to say for them, that it is a true expression of their estimate of your Essay. They both join me in affectionate salutations.

In haste and heartiness, your friend,  
THEODORE D. WELD.

The following is from Miss Grimke, formerly of South Carolina, whose opinion, and that of her sister, Mrs. Weld, is valuable; not only on account of their own literary reputation, but because, as Southern ladies, they are particularly qualified to judge of the merits of a work on the subject of Slavery.

Dear Bro.—I feel impelled to add a line, to say, that I bless the Lord for the Essay you have prepared, in behalf of the poor slave; and my heart yearns that He, who has filled thy heart with love to the poor, may give you more and more of his spirit, until your whole being is absorbed in God; that you may do yet greater things, to help forward the great work of regenerating the world. To do this, we must become embodiments of Divine Love; and God will raise up such, to *live out* his Gospel, and be representatives on earth, of love to God and good will to man.

When you go over your manuscript, try it all again by the spirit of Jesus. Look to Him and he will help you. There was one expression, which I cannot recall, in the same part of the work with the word "fool," which seemed to savor more of earth, than heaven, if you detect it, think of it.

Faithfully,

SARAH M. GRIMKE,

PEMBERTON, N. J., *Sept.* 20, 1847.

Dear Bro.—I have perused “Slaveholding Examined in the Light of the Holy Bible” with unfeigned interest.

I consider its exposition of Scripture, faithful and true ; its arguments candid and convincing ; its reminiscences of slavery startling, and its appeals to slaveholders pungent and powerful—an excellent work, and well adapted to convince the reader that the Bible affords no refuge for oppression.

Yours in the Gospel, &c.,

D. S. PARMELEE.

PHILADELPHIA, *Sept.* 25, 1847.

Rev. WM. H. BRISBANE :

*Dear Sir* :—I have read, with as much attention as my engagements would permit, your Biblical Examination of Slaveholding ; and while I could not pretend, on such a cursory perusal, to endorse every idea or form of expression contained in it, yet I can say, without qualification, that I think the views you have advanced, correct, the principles of interpretation you have followed, sound, and the result to which you have arrived, to be, in almost every passage, the one which a just criticism would demand. May your effort contribute much to expose the unfounded assumption that the Holy Scriptures, in any form, uphold and sanction the abominable system of enslaving the bodies and souls of men.

Yours truly,

GEO. B. IDE.

PHILADELPHIA, *Sept.* 6, 1847.

*My Dear Sir* :—I have looked over the proof-sheets of your forth-coming work, “Slavery Examined in the Light of the Holy Bible,” with very great pleasure.

The fact that you yourself were reared in the midst of slavery, and were yourself a slaveholder, will give additional force to the work. When the time shall come, and come it will, when posterity shall look back with wonder and shame that in so plain a case in morals, there could be found professing christians apologizing for such a heaven-daring system of iniquity as American Slavery, your book will doubtless be looked upon as one of the very many instrumentalities in removing the thick film which now so obscures the moral vision.

Yours, truly, for truth and humanity,

C. D. CLEVELAND.

Rev. WM. H. BRISBANE.

Sept. 17, 1847.

I have examined a work entitled "Slaveholding Examined in the Light of the Holy Bible," by Wm. H. Brisbane, and I do not hesitate to say, that it is the most lucid and convincing refutation of the assumption that slavery is sanctioned by the Bible that I have ever seen, and in my judgment, it is well adapted on account of its spirit arrangement and style to enlighten and convince all classes of mind that American Slavery is directly opposed to the teachings of the Old and New Testament.

HIRAM HUTCHINS,  
Pastor of the Baptist Church, Norristown, Pa.

Extracts from Letters from Mr. Lewis Tappan, of N. Y.

"There is no doubt that your little work is an excellent performance, and that it will do much good." \* \* \*

"Most of the anecdotes refer to members of the *Baptist* Church. All the readers will not know that you are a member and minister of that denomination, and may therefore suppose the author was unfeelingly critical with the Baptists." \* \* \* \*

## ERRATA.

Page 22, line 20, for to, read unto.

- |      |      |                                                      |
|------|------|------------------------------------------------------|
| " 23 | " 14 | " nations shall, read nations and great kings shall. |
| " "  | " 15 | " 4—14, read 9—14.                                   |
| " 29 | " 21 | " 1 read 1, 2.                                       |
| " 31 | " 22 | " Abram, read Abraham.                               |
| " 32 | " 23 | " natural, read national.                            |
| " 34 | " 21 | " xxii, read xxxii.                                  |
| " 38 | " 14 | " cattle that, read cattle nor thy stranger that.    |
| " 39 | " 8  | " a, read an.                                        |
| " "  | " 14 | " born, read borne.                                  |
| " 42 | " 13 | " 10, read 10, 11,                                   |
| " 43 | " 18 | " 6, read 2.                                         |
| " 50 | " 1  | " maid, read a maid.                                 |
| " "  | " 9  | " temporally, read temporarily.                      |
| " "  | " 16 | " xx, read xxi.                                      |
| " 50 | " 10 | " to a, read to an.                                  |
| " 55 | " 9  | " or a, read or an.                                  |
| " 57 | " 20 | " 39, read 39—43.                                    |
| " "  | " 24 | " a, read an.                                        |
| " 58 | " 23 | " bondmaids, read and thy bondmaids.                 |
| " 65 | " 26 | " And if, read " And if.                             |

|         |             |                                                                        |
|---------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Page 66 | " 7 "       | or if, read or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family; or if.  |
| " 71    | " 1 "       | thy, read thine.                                                       |
| " 79    | " 13 "      | master." read master.                                                  |
| " "     | " 20 "      | able to, read able utterly to.                                         |
| " 82    | " 5 "       | or, read or a.                                                         |
| " 89    | " 21 "      | Revelations, read Revelation.                                          |
| " 92    | " 4 "       | shouldst, read shouldest.                                              |
| " 94    | " 11 "      | , read .                                                               |
| " 95    | " 18 "      | xii, read xiii.                                                        |
| " 102   | " 1 "       | Aud, read And.                                                         |
| " "     | " 11 "      | bring, read bid.                                                       |
| " "     | " 21 "      | his, read the.                                                         |
| " 104   | " 13 "      | the Lord, read his lord.                                               |
| " 108   | " 27 "      | which, read that.                                                      |
| " "     | " " "       | from him, read away.                                                   |
| " 111   | " 24 "      | 22, read 22—26.                                                        |
| " 112   | " 1 "       | his, read the.                                                         |
| " "     | " 16 "      | afterwards, read afterward.                                            |
| " 113   | " 22 "      | and said, read saying.                                                 |
| " 114   | " 8 "       | laidest, read layedest.                                                |
| " 121   | " 14 "      | thus, read then.                                                       |
| " "     | " 21 "      | yourselves, read your members.                                         |
| " 122   | " 2 "       | ashamed? But, read ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But. |
| " 123   | " 23 "      | 22, read 24.                                                           |
| " 124   | " 26 "      | temptation, read temptation.                                           |
| " 126   | " 19 "      | Corinthians, read 1. Corinthians.                                      |
| " 132   | " 22 & 23 " | for blasphemed And, read blasphemed. And.                              |
| " 135   | " 1 "       | for like, read as.                                                     |
| " 139   | " 7 & 8 "   | for reception 7, read reception. 7.                                    |
| " 147   | " 6 "       | for your, read the.                                                    |
| " "     | " " "       | which, read who.                                                       |
| " 148   | " 19 "      | it all, read it at all.                                                |
| " 159   | " 16 "      | And, read thou.                                                        |
| " 163   | " 3 "       | xiv, read xlv.                                                         |
| " 164   | " 25 & 26 " | for shoes, read shoes; yea.                                            |
| " 165   | " 15 "      | for xiv, 31, read xxii, 22, 23.                                        |
| " 166   | " 10 "      | ix, read iv.                                                           |
| " 174   | " 13 "      | it shall, read shall it.                                               |
| " 176   | " 14 "      | master, read masters.                                                  |
| " 179   | " 6 "       | 18, read 18, 19.                                                       |
| " 186   | " 16 "      | Timothy, read 1. Timothy.                                              |
| " 196   | " 19 "      | advantges, read advantages.                                            |

On pages 22 and 23, quotations from Deut., Jeremiah and Joel have the points of separation omitted.

## INDEX.

|                         |     |                           |     |
|-------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Genesis ix. 25-27       | 19  | Leviticus xxv. 51-55      | 65  |
| “ xiii. 1, 2            | 29  | Numbers xxxi. 9           | 76  |
| “ xvii. 12, 13          | 30  | Deuteronomy v. 14, 21     | 38  |
| “ xxiii. 6              | 31  | “ xv. 12 18               | 70  |
| “ xxiv. 18              | 31  | “ “ 17 41 44              | 70  |
| “ xxv. 23               | 32  | “ xx. 12-14               | 75  |
| “ xxvi. 14              | 33  | “ xxiii. 3                | 65  |
| “ xxvii. 37             | 32  | “ “ 7                     | 33  |
| “ “ 40                  | 33  | “ xxiv. 7                 | 161 |
| “ xxix. 24 29           | 34  | “ “ 15 16, 57 63          | 150 |
| “ xxx. 43               | 34  | “ xxviii 30 32 33         |     |
| “ xxxii. 5              | 34  | 41 68                     | 22  |
| Exodus xii. 43, 44 45   | 35  | Joshua ix 14              | 78  |
| “ xx. 10, 17            | 38  | “ “ 23, 27                | 77  |
| “ xxi. 2-6 39 55        | 55  | Judges ii. 14             | 43  |
| “ “ 7-11 42 53          | 53  | Ruth iv. 10               | 43  |
| “ “ 16 61 160 187       | 187 | I Samuel ix. 22           | 84  |
| “ “ 20, 21 45           | 45  | II Samuel xii. 31         | 78  |
| “ “ 26, 27 62           | 62  | I Kings ix. 9-12          | 84  |
| “ “ 28-30 50            | 50  | “ “ 20-22                 | 79  |
| “ “ 32 49               | 49  | II Kings iv. 1            | 81  |
| “ xxii. 3 50            | 50  | “ vi. 22, 23              | 79  |
| “ “ 21 64 76 159        | 159 | “ xvii. 17                | 43  |
| “ xxiii. 9 159          | 159 | “ xx. 18                  | 23  |
| Leviticus xix. 20 51 62 | 62  | I Chronicles ii. 34 35    | 85  |
| “ “ 21, 22 62           | 62  | II Chronicles viii. 7 8 9 | 80  |
| “ “ 34 64               | 64  | “ xviii. 8-15             | 40  |
| “ xxii. 10-13 55 62     | 62  | Nehemiah iv. 16           | 85  |
| “ xxiv. 22 63           | 63  | “ v. 5-12 40, 161         | 161 |
| “ xxv. 6 56             | 56  | “ xi. 3                   | 85  |
| “ “ 10 63               | 63  | Esther viii. 17           | 63  |
| “ “ 35 36 82            | 82  | Job vii. 2-3              | 82  |
| “ “ 39, 40 36 51 57     | 57  | “ xxxi. 13, 38, 39        | 84  |
| “ “ 41 67               | 67  | “ xli. 5                  | 85  |
| “ “ 42, 37 40 51 55     | 55  | Psalms lxxii. 4           | 200 |
| “ “ 58 67 82            | 82  | Proverbs xxii. 16         | 199 |
| “ “ 43 57 67            | 67  | “ “ 22, 23                | 165 |
| “ “ 44 51 87 88         | 88  | Isaiah liii. 3            | 43  |
| “ “ 45, 46, 57 87 88    | 88  | “ lviii. 6                | 201 |
| “ “ 47 61 65 71         | 71  | Jeremiah ii. 14           | 83  |
| “ “ 48, 49 65           | 65  | “ xvii. 4                 | 22  |
| “ “ 50 37 51 65         | 65  | “ xxi. 12                 | 200 |
|                         |     | “ xxii. 13                | 165 |

## INDEX—Continued.

|                         |         |                        |          |
|-------------------------|---------|------------------------|----------|
| Jeremiah xxv. 9-14      | 23      | Luke xvi 13            | 91       |
| “ xxx. 16, 18-20        | 23      | “ xvii 7-10            | 112      |
| “ xxxiv 17              | 162     | “ xix 12-27            | 113      |
| Lamentations iii. 34-36 | 162     | “ xx. 9-12             | 99       |
| Ezekiel xviii. 12, 13   | 162     | “ xxii. 25-27          | 173      |
| “ xxii. 29              | 162     | John viii. 34-36       | 116      |
| “ xlv. 9                | 163     | “ xviii 10             | 110      |
| Hosea iii. 2            | 43      | “ “ 18                 | 111      |
| Joel iii. 3-8           | 24, 163 | “ “ 26                 | 111      |
| Amos v. 12              | 164     | Acts ii. 18            | 118      |
| “ viii. 4-8             | 165     | “ x. 7                 | 119, 140 |
| Habakkuk ii. 6          | 165     | “ xvi. 16-19           | 119      |
| Matthew iv. 10          | 166     | “ xvii. 26             | 183      |
| “ vi. 24                | 91      | Romans vi. 16-23       | 121      |
| “ vii. 12               | 168     | “ xiv. 4               | 123      |
| “ viii. 5-13            | 91      | 1 Corinthians v. 11    | 183      |
| “ x. 24, 25             | 94      | “ vi. 10               | 183      |
| “ xiii. 27, 28          | 95      | “ vii. 15              | 129      |
| “ xiv. 1, 2             | 95      | “ “ 20-24              | 123      |
| “ xviii. 23-34          | 96      | “ ix. 19               | 126      |
| “ xx. 1-15              | 116     | 2 Corinthians iv. 5    | 126      |
| “ “ 25-28               | 173     | “ xi. 20               | 184      |
| “ xxi. 33-36            | 99      | Galatians iv. 1-7      | 127      |
| “ xxii. 2-13            | 101     | Ephesians vi 5-9       | 128      |
| “ xxiii. 10-12          | 176     | Philippians ii. 7      | 130      |
| “ xxiv. 45-51           | 104     | Colossians iii. 11     | 185      |
| “ xxv. 14-30            | 107     | “ “ 22-25              | 131      |
| “ xxvi. 51              | 110     | “ iv. 1                | 131      |
| Mark x. 42-45           | 173     | I Thessaloneans iv. 11 | 147      |
| “ xii. 2-5              | 99      | I Timothy i, 10        | 186      |
| “ xiv. 47               | 110     | “ vi 1, 2              | 132 144  |
| “ “ 65                  | 111     | Titus ii. 9, 10        | 136      |
| Luke iv. 8              | 166     | Philemon 10-19         | 137      |
| “ “ 18-19               | 179     | Hebrews xiii. 3        | 185      |
| “ vii. 2-10             | 91      | James ii. 9            | 154      |
| “ xii. 37               | 182     | “ v. 4                 | 147      |
| “ xii. 42-48            | 104     | I Peter ii. 18-20      | 139      |
| “ xiv. 16-24            | 101     | II Peter ii. 3         | 155      |
| “ xv. 22-26             | 111     | Revelation xviii. 13   | 89 155   |

# SLAVEHOLDING EXAMINED

IN THE LIGHT

OF

THE HOLY BIBLE,

BY

WILLIAM HENRY BRISBANE,

A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST.

~~~~~  
“ Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.”
~~~~~

PHILADELPHIA:

1847.

---

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the  
year 1847,

BY WILLIAM HENRY BRISBANE,  
in the Office of the Clerk of the District Court  
for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

---

Stereotyped by  
S. DOUGLAS WYETH, No. 7 Pear St.  
Philadelphia.

---

Printed at the  
U. S. JOB PRINTING OFFICE.

---



## PREFACE.

FOR several years I have been examining the question of slavery with great care and attention. Once a slaveholder myself, born, brought up, and educated in the midst of slaveholders and slaves, I first investigated this subject with all the zeal and energy of the warmest supporters of the so-called "peculiar institution." In time I found myself perplexed with the results of my own arguments. I discovered my error: I became convinced that slaveholding was unrighteous: I abandoned it; and was conscientiously constrained to give freedom to upwards of thirty slaves. I have had to sacrifice a large portion of my patrimony, to exile myself from my native state, and to be cut off from the enjoyments of home, of friendship, and of brotherhood. I feel, therefore, that I have a claim to be heard.

I know what are the struggles in a conscientious slaveholder's mind. I know his difficulties in an investigation of the subject of slavery, and I know how it is he mistakes the teachings of the Bible. I trust the following pages will serve to open the eyes of some to the sinfulness of slaveholding, and be the means of emancipating many slaves.

Although I do not write this book for the scholar ; but for the plain English reader ; yet I have been careful not to violate the rules of a just criticism ; and that I may guard the reader against any mistake, I wish here to make a few critical observations.

It is often insisted upon, and with much pertinacity, that the Hebrew "*ebedh*," and the Greek "*doulos*," mean generally "slave," and that "servant" also, in the New Testament and elsewhere, frequently means *slave*. Without pretending to be much of a linguist myself, I cannot but express, nevertheless, great surprise, that learned critics have suffered themselves to fall into this error. I unhesitatingly say, that neither *ebedh*, *doulos*, nor *servant*, ever means *slave*. The word *servant* pre-

cisely expresses the meaning of the words *ebedh*\* and *doulos*; and it is always impossible to judge from either word of itself, independently of other circumstances, whether a slave be spoken of or not. It does not mean a slave, a hireling, or a bondman; but it means one who serves. Such a one may be a slave, a bondman, a hireling, or neither. The word of itself never determines the condition of the servant, or the relation he holds to the one he serves. This must be determined by the context or the occasion.

The ancients had no word in common use to signify *slave*. This is a word of comparatively modern origin. Formerly that condition, now called slavery, was signified by the connection in which the word *servant* was employed, or by some word that specified a particular people, whose condition was well known; as the Helots of Sparta;—so the condition of involuntary or forced servitude is now expressed either by the connection and circumstances in which the word *servant*

\* The Hebrew *ebedh* signifies *laborer* and thence *servant*.

is employed, or by the word *slave*, which is a corruption of the word Sclavonian—the name of a people whom the Venitians conquered and sold, and of whom the serfs of Russia are now the regular descendants.

So of the word *master* in English, and the Greek word *despotes*—they do not necessarily mean the owner of slaves. God is addressed as a despot by good old Simeon, in Luke ii. 29; and by the worshippers in Acts iv. 24; and in Jude 4, and Rev. vi. 10. But God's government is that of a father over his children. And Jesus Christ is called a despot by Peter. (2 Pet. ii. 1.) But Jesus Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light. His servants serve him from choice; they are not slaves. The servants in our Northern states are during their term of service under despots; i. e. they are under the entire management of the proprietor of the premises, who employs them in his service: they are voluntarily under his absolute authority. But a despotic government is not necessarily an oppressive one; when, therefore, the government of

the master or despot becomes oppressive, the contract is no longer binding.

In England, the servants call their employers *master*. But those servants have their civil rights and their means of redress when wronged. They are not slaves.

In the following pages I do not discuss the relation of the despot or master to the *doulos*, or servant. I only argue the question of the relation of the despot or master to the *slave*. And I hope the reader will bear this in mind throughout. Whether any despotic government is ever right in itself, except that of the Almighty and the Holy God over his creatures, or of the father over his children in their early years, I design neither to affirm nor to deny. It is a question separate from the one discussed in this book, and so far as my argument goes it does not touch it. Whether the Bible sanctions, justifies, tolerates, or merely on account of the peculiar condition of the world suffers the relation of the despot and subject, the master and servant, I am not disposed to meddle with in these pages. But to the naked question of the relation of master and slave, I wish

to limit the attention of the reader ; and I hope every Christian who commences the perusal of this little book, will go through it determined to deal fairly with the writer, and not by making other issues, wander off from the direct question.

And may He who looks into all hearts, dispose every one who examines this subject, to deal honestly with his own conscience, and give him grace to follow out his convictions of truth without the fear of man, or the love of worldly ease.

Respectfully,

THE AUTHOR.

# CONTENTS.



|                                      | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| PREFACE . . . . .                    | 3    |
| CHAPTER I.                           |      |
| Slavery Defined . . . . .            | 11   |
| CHAPTER II.                          |      |
| Canaan's Curse . . . . .             | 19   |
| CHAPTER III.                         |      |
| Servants of the Patriarchs . . . . . | 27   |
| CHAPTER IV.                          |      |
| Mosaic Institutions . . . . .        | 35   |
| CHAPTER V.                           |      |
| Historical Evidences . . . . .       | 77   |
| CHAPTER VI.                          |      |
| Examination of the Gospels . . . . . | 89   |

## CHAPTER VII.

|                      |   |   |   |     |
|----------------------|---|---|---|-----|
| Acts of the Apostles | - | - | - | 118 |
|----------------------|---|---|---|-----|

## CHAPTER VIII.

|              |   |   |   |     |
|--------------|---|---|---|-----|
| The Epistles | - | - | - | 121 |
|--------------|---|---|---|-----|

## CHAPTER IX.

|                                                                                     |   |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----|
| The Incompatibility of Slavery with the Laws<br>and Principles of the Old Testament | - | 156 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----|

## CHAPTER X.

|                                                                                                |   |   |   |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|
| The Incompatibility of Slavery with the Prin-<br>ciples and Precepts of the New Testa-<br>ment | - | - | - | 166 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|

## CHAPTER XI.

|                                          |   |     |
|------------------------------------------|---|-----|
| Slavery as existing in the United States | - | 190 |
|------------------------------------------|---|-----|

## CHAPTER XII.

|                          |   |   |     |
|--------------------------|---|---|-----|
| Reminiscences of Slavery | - | - | 202 |
|--------------------------|---|---|-----|



# SLAVEHOLDING EXAMINED

IN THE LIGHT OF

THE HOLY BIBLE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### SLAVERY DEFINED.

WHAT is slavery? This question has frequently been asked, and many writers have attempted to reply to it, without giving a clear and satisfactory definition. And hence very much of the difficulty in making a Southern slaveholder comprehend an argument to prove that the Bible condemns slavery. Having myself experienced this difficulty when I was the owner of slaves in South Carolina, I have learned in the process of my investigations that I was labouring under an erroneous definition of the term itself; nor was it until I had observed what I had considered the

abuses of slavery were the very essence of the thing itself, that I was persuaded to believe that slavery was condemned by the Bible. The amount of it is just this—nothing is slavery into which the idea of oppression does not enter. One may have a servant for life and that servant may fall as a part of the inheritance to his heirs, but if the bondman have the legal means of redress and the capability of shielding himself from imposition and wrong, he is no slave. The mere fact of being a servant or even a bondman does not make him a slave;—an apprentice is not only a servant, but in fact he is a bondman—he is bound to a master, but his bondage is for his own benefit. If it turn out that he has no resource from imposition and wrong inflicted by his master, then that apprentice is not only a bondman but a slave.

Slavery, therefore, I define to be that condition in which one is in the power of another, whom he is compelled to serve, without the means of redress when wronged.

Will it be objected to this definition

that wives and children are oftentimes in this condition? I reply that if it be so, then such wives and such children are in a state of slavery. A wife who may be wronged by her husband without any way of deliverance from his power, or any means of redress, is to all intents and purposes a slave; and the husband or father that possesses such power is a slaveholder, and he who voluntarily retains such authority is voluntarily an oppressor. But in our country, among the white population, wives, children, and apprentices have the legal means of securing themselves against the oppressive authority of husbands, parents and masters: they are therefore not slaves.

I repeat: A slave is one who is in the power of another, whom he is compelled to serve, without the power of redress when wronged.

That this definition is correct is evident from the fact, that the term slave is every where employed to represent an oppressed condition. If a nation be forced to pay an unjust tribute to another government, it is spoken of as a nation of slaves. Orators

invariably represent that people to be slaves who are compelled to submit to oppressive laws. Demagogues, in their addresses to the populace, arouse their passions by appeals to them whether they are willing to be slaves, as they endeavour to enforce upon their minds the importance of a change in the legislative or executive offices of the State, because those in power have been exercising that power oppressively upon the people. In fact, if the lowest, most degrading forms of oppression are intended to be represented by one word, that word is "slavery." When a man is so low as to be called a slave, there is no one word that language can afford to signify a more oppressive state into which he might be placed than that very word SLAVE. There may be terms significant of lower and more debased *character*, but none that would represent a greater degree of *oppression*. All nations employ the word which in their language signifies the condition of a slave, to express that sort of degradation which is either the occasion or the effect of oppression. But the idea of an oppressed condition always

enters more or less into the signification of the term whether it be used in a literal or a figurative sense. If there be, therefore, a synonym of the word *slavery*, it must be the word *oppression*, for in the common use of language these two words are made to be almost convertible terms. A people oppressed without being able to throw off their oppressions are an enslaved people—and no one speaks of an *enslaved* people without feeling that they are an *oppressed* people.

If slavery be, then, a condition of oppression, and that nothing is slavery which does not involve the idea of oppression, it would seem to be almost unnecessary to attempt to prove that the Bible does not justify nor even tolerate slavery. But that it may be seen what the Bible does teach on this subject, I shall take up the examination of those passages in the Scriptures which are generally supposed to favour the institution of slavery, and I think I shall prove to every candid mind, that such a construction does injustice to the God of the Bible, and is a perversion

of the language employed by the inspired writers.

There is a difficulty in the mind of every slaveholder in the way of a correct interpretation of the Scriptures, arising from the use of the word *servant*. When he reads any thing in the Bible about *servants* he is very apt to have in his mind just such servants as he is accustomed to have about him; and hence he readily arrives at the conclusion that God sanctions *slavery*. So also as to the words *bondmen* and *bondmaids*, even a Northerner is liable to be wrongly biased in his construction, in consequence of his habit of thinking of the Southern slaves as bondmen and bondmaids. Were it not, however, for the existence of slavery within the field of our common observation, we would have other classes than slaves to recognize as servants and as bondmen. Neither *servant* nor *bondman* necessarily implies *slavery*. A *slave* is both a servant and a bondman, because the master requires the slave to be a servant, and because the law binds him to obedience. But others than slaves may be either servants or bondmen. If I serve

you, I am your servant. If I bind myself to serve you for certain considerations I am your bondman. In either case I may have redress when you violate your obligations, and therefore I am not a slave.

Now I beg the reader to bear in mind this distinction, and remember that throughout, I am not arguing against the relation of master and servant, nor master and bondman ; but against the relation of master and slave. He must not allow himself to evade the true issue, by making that specific which is generic. The specific thing is SLAVERY, and this I have already clearly defined. It is a condition of servitude in which there is oppression without the means of redress or deliverance. If it be said such a condition is to be found elsewhere than in so-called slave States, I admit it, and candidly allow that slavery, if not to the same extent of oppression as in our Southern States, nevertheless to a very guilty extent, whether under that name or not, exists both in England and in the Northern States of this Union. But this fact does not extenuate or palliate a yet greater degree of slavery, such as we wit-

ness among the blacks of the South. The oppressive laws of the North, are no justification of greater oppressions at the South. Nevertheless, what I am about to prove is that *slavery* whether in the less cruel form in which it exists in a free state, or in the more cruel form in which it is to be found in Georgia or Carolina, has no sanction, no justification in the Bible.

And now what does the Bible say about slaves? Is the reader aware that the word "slave" does not occur either in the Old or New Testament from beginning to end? In King James' translation it is introduced once in the Old Testament, but it is in italics, which indicates that it is merely supplied by the translators, but is not in the original text. It also occurs in the same translation only once in the New Testament; but in the original text it is "*bodies*," and not "*slaves*." We have therefore no word either in the Old or New Testament which in the original Hebrew and Greek means *slavery*. If therefore such a condition be alluded to in the Bible, it must be comprehended in some other term or terms, of which the context



will be the exponent. Hence we must inquire at every step of this Biblical examination, Does the sacred writer mean *slavery* or not? Wheresoever it is intended, I shall candidly and honestly admit it; and I presume the reader will be as candid when it cannot be proved that *slavery* is *not* necessarily involved in the text.



## CHAPTER II.

### CANAAN'S CURSE.

I AM now to examine those passages in the Bible, which are supposed to favour slavery.

The first passage coming before us is one upon which great emphasis is laid by those who argue in defence of slavery. It is the curse upon Canaan. And now I will, for the sake of the argument, assume that Noah prophesied a condition of slavery, and I ask the reader to look at this passage carefully, and say, Was it God or was it man that uttered that curse? Is

there any thing about it that implies that Noah spake as moved by the Spirit of God? Is it any thing more than an historical fact in the life of Noah? It will perhaps be said, the fulfilment of the prophecy is proof of Noah's inspiration. Now let us look into this a little.

Remember that although Ham was the offender, the curse was not upon all of Ham's posterity, but only upon the descendants of his fourth son, Canaan. The very first man mentioned as a *mighty one* in the earth was Nimrod, a descendant from Ham. In the same lineal descent from Ham was Asshur, who built Nineveh. The posterity of Abraham who descended from Shem were carried captive into Assyria of which Nineveh was the capital. They also were servants to the Babylonians. They were also slaves in Egypt to Ham's posterity. On the other hand, the Canaanites were servants to the sons of Shem only to an inconsiderable extent, but were for the most part extirpated by the sword of the Israelites, and finally exterminated. Again; the sons of Japheth have been captives and servants to the sons of

Ham. Thus we see that if Noah had prophesied respecting the personal servitude of the posterity of either of his sons, the prophecy would have been fulfilled, for the plain reason that the posterity of each of them have been in servitude. And so far as it respected Canaan, upon whom the curse was pronounced, the servitude predicted was as little applicable to his posterity as it was to the sons of Shem or Japheth. The fulfilment of the prophecy therefore would be no proof that Noah spake by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It would amount to a mere historical fact that Noah thus conducted himself and thus spake.

But for the sake of meeting all points, suppose I concede that either as a prophecy or a curse, the language of Noah was the language of God. Does it therefore follow that they who enforce the curse are not themselves acting wickedly in so doing? Let us see how this works in reference to another prophecy and curse that were distinctly said to have been pronounced by God himself. In 2 Samuel xii. 11, the language is,—“Thus saith the

Lord, Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun.”

Again “Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her,” Deut. xxviii.

30. What will be said to this? If the prophecy that Canaan shall be a servant of servants to his brethren justifies slavery, is it not an equally legitimate inference that the prophecies just quoted justify adultery?

But we have something still more directly to the point: The Lord said to the Jewish people, “Ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you,” (Deut. xxviii. 68.) “Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given to another people: thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them, for they shall go into captivity,” (Deut. xxviii. 32—43.) “I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not,” (Jer. xvii. 4.) Of Hezekiah’s sons it was said,

“They shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon,” (2 Kings xx. 18.) And of the families of the North, “Behold, I will send and take all the families of the North, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof: and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord. For many nations shall serve themselves of them also,” (Jer. xxv. 4—14.) “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents—And I will punish all that oppress them,” (Jer. xxx. 18—20.) “All thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity: and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey,” (Jer. xxx. 16.) “And they have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye

sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head : And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off : for the Lord hath spoken it," (Joel iii. 3—8.)

In these prophecies, we have it distinctly set forth that the Jews were to be servants in Babylon, that is, the sons of Shem were to serve the sons of Ham, and they were to be sold among the Grecians also. But did these prophecies justify their masters? Nay ; for they too, for thus enslaving the Jews, should themselves, as a punishment, be enslaved. Thus in God's providence the wicked are made to punish the wicked, and successive generations produce revolutions in character as there are changes of condition. Thus it is evident that a mere prophecy of what will be, is no justification of its fulfilment ; and it is not safe to deduce moral conclusions and consequent rules of action from mere prophetic

annunciations. If we do, we may educe that falsehood, robbery and adultery are all right; and that it was perfectly right on the part of the Jews to crucify Jesus Christ, for such crucifixion was clearly foretold.

But still we have not come to the direct point at issue. Did Noah prophesy any thing at all respecting slavery? Did he utter one word about it? Suppose I deny. Will any one affirm? Upon him rests the weight of proof. Can he find any testimony in the case to warrant the conclusion that *slavery* was the thing intended? Remember what slavery is; that it is something specific; that it cannot be slavery unless it involves the idea of oppression, and consequently an oppressor. But do we find this in the language of Noah? Certainly he does not employ the word *slave*; this is neither in the translation nor in the original Hebrew. How then do any get at *slavery* in the passage? Canaan was to be a *servant*, but it does not follow he was to be a *slave*; nay, the inference is otherwise, for he was to be a servant of servants. We can readily understand how one may be the servant of a servant; but

how one can be the slave of a slave is not so readily perceived; for a slave according to the statute of South Carolina, and according to all judicial decision, is himself a chattel, and can possess nothing but what is his master's; consequently he cannot own a slave and cannot be a master. It may therefore be inferred that Noah did not have personal *slavery* in view, but only national subjection. Canaan nationally would be subject to Shem; but Shem himself would be nationally subject to Japheth; and thus would Canaan be the servant of servants. The term *servant* is very frequently employed in the Old Testament to signify both the officers and the subjects of a national sovereignty. Give it this signification in the prophecy of Noah, and the whole is easily understood. I have myself no doubt that Noah designed a national and not an individual appropriation of the curse, a national subjection (which need not however imply an oppressive government) and not domestic *slavery*.

If this has been historically fulfilled, then it may be some evidence that Noah spake



as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. But I myself do not find in any history, either that Canaan ever served Japheth or that Shem and Japheth never served Canaan. I should be glad to be informed on this point. But I know no method of ascertaining it.

I think I have now clearly shown that this passage is by no means evidence of the rightfulness of slavery or of slaveholding. And I cannot but think that when the reader again hears this prophecy adduced as a demonstration of God's approval or even toleration of *slavery*, he will pronounce it, as the lawyers say, a *non sequitur*.



### CHAPTER III.

#### SERVANTS OF THE PATRIARCHS.

THE next argument in order generally adduced by the advocate of slavery is that Abraham possessed slaves, and that he was not censured for it. And if he who is called the father of the faithful could

own slaves, it cannot be a sin in itself to be a slaveholder. The inference, however, in this case is not a legitimate one, even supposing that Abraham was a slaveholder. If it be good logic, then both lying and adultery are also justifiable, for Abraham was guilty of virtually denying that Sarah was his wife, and also had Hagar for his concubine, without in either case having it recorded that God rebuked him for it.

But were Abraham's servants and bondmen and women *slaves*? To prove that they were slaves, it must be shewn that they were oppressed without the power of redress. Was that their case? I think this cannot be inferred from the History. In the case of Hagar who was a bondwoman, her mistress to punish her and her son, insisted that Abraham should cast them out, i. e. set them free. In our Southern states the mistress would have her slave sold, not set free. The inference therefore is that Hagar was not a *slave*, but was in that sort of bondage which did not amount to a condition of oppression. And so although it be said

that Abraham and Lot had "souls that they had gotten in Haran;" and "men servants and maid servants" are named as among the things Abraham had in Egypt; and again that Abimelech, king of Gerar, gave him "men servants and women servants;" and finally, that Abraham had servants that were "born in his own house," and he had others that were "bought with money of any stranger." Yet, although all this be true, the inference is that whether home-born, or purchased, or a gift, these were not *slaves*. I say the inference is that these *servants* were not *slaves*. I infer it from incidental passages. Suppose I should say of some Northern man residing at the South, he is very rich in *cattle*, in *silver* and in *gold*, would it not be asked, What! has he no slaves? Now just so it is said of Abraham (Gen. xiii. 1). "And Abram went out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him into the South. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold." Now if the hundred or thousand or more servants he had about him were *slaves*, how does it

happen that these are not named as a part of his riches? But again, suppose I were to say of some one residing at the North, He is very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold. Would any one infer that he had no servants? On the contrary, would not the inference be that he must have many servants; and would it not be likely that some of them would be indentured, or bound (bond) servants; and would it not be further likely that some would be born upon his estate, grow up thereon and be his labourers or servants? But if this can be under such a government as ours, how much more likely to be so under a Patriarchal government?

Again, I infer these servants were not slaves; because they were armed, and acted the part of soldiers.

Again, I see if Abraham had died childless, one of his servants would have been his heir. Is this consistent with a state of slavery?

Indeed, it is plain that Abraham's servants, whether born in his house or bought with money of any stranger, were treated as his family. (Gen. xvii. 12, 13). His head

servant was called by Abraham's own niece, "My lord." (Gen. xxiv. 18.)

The term servant is so frequently employed throughout the Bible to signify the subjects and officers of a king, it is an easy inference that these servants were to Abraham the Patriarch, what servants were to David the king. When therefore it is said, "One born in mine house is mine heir," it means that one of his subjects would succeed to the government; being born in his house, only signified that they were of his own tribe. Those that were bought with his money of strangers, were such as united with his tribe or household upon his paying a consideration to some neighbouring King or Prince. And so when it is said that Abimelech gave him men servants and maid servants, I presume nothing more is meant than that the king of Gerar transferred to the Patriarch Abram a portion of his subjects, both male and female; and let it be recollected that Abraham was called a "mighty prince." (Gen. xxiii. 6.) Then again, those taken in war became the servants of the conqueror, i. e. his subjects; so it is pre-

sumable that Abraham extended his Patriarchate by such acquisition also.

I do not assert that Abraham did not hold men and women in a condition of involuntary servitude; but I do say that there is nothing in the history to prove it; and until such proof can be reached, the advocate of slavery has no right to quote Abraham's example on his side of the question; and I repeat, even if it were proved that he was a slaveholder, it would be no more apology for slavery, than his example affords an apology for lying and adultery.

Gen. xxv. 23—xxvii. 37.

"The elder shall serve the younger."  
"I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants."

This was prophesied concerning the descendants of Esau and Jacob. But I presume no one would rest upon these passages as a justification of chattel servitude. It evidently implied nothing more than natural subjection as the text shews. Nevertheless, should any one be disposed to draw from it an inference in favour of slavery,

I refer him to Deuteronomy xxiii. 7.—  
“Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite: for he is thy brother.” The Edomites, although as prophesied they became nationally subject to Israel, were nevertheless to be regarded as brethren, and provision was made in the law of Moses ultimately to incorporate them into the Jewish nation on a perfect equality; and Esau was finally to break the yoke of Jacob from off his neck. Gen. xxvii. 40.

Gen. xxvi. 14,

“He had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants.”

This is recorded of Isaac. Will it be assumed therefrom that Isaac owned slaves? But if the phraseology be closely observed, it will lead to a different inference. Mark! he had *possession of flocks*, and *possession of herds*. But it does not say he had *possession of servants*. He had great store of servants, and I infer that these servants were his followers, of whom he was prince or chief. Can this inference be disproved? I see nothing in

the history of Isaac to sustain the idea that his servants were slaves, or were in any way an oppressed people, without means of redress if wronged by their master.

Gen. xxix. 24. 29.

“Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid for a handmaid.”

“And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.”

Do these passages imply that these maids were slaves? I think not. There would be nothing implying a condition of slavery, should I say to my daughter, ‘I give you Biddy for your handmaid, although Biddy is a free girl and can leave my service when she pleases.’ Besides, you will observe that these handmaids became the “wives” of Jacob, their mistresses’ husband.

Gen. xxx. 43—xxii. 5.

“And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid servants and men servants, and camels and asses.”



“I have oxen, and asses, flocks and men servants and women servants.”

Were these maid and men servants slaves? But where is the proof? If Jacob had much cattle and camels and asses, he must necessarily have servants to take care of them. And I infer they were Jacob's servants, as Jacob was himself the servant of Laban—entitled to wages.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MOSAIC INSTITUTIONS.

Exodus xii. 43, 44, 45.

“AND the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the pass-over: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof.”

This was said to Moses and Aaron at the time the passover was first instituted.

The advocate for slavery claims that the

servant bought for money was a slave. He argues on this subject as if the Jews borrowed their phraseology and terms from our usages; whereas we have rather appropriated the terms of the ancients to our customs and institutions, without making allowance for all the modifications of signification, which time and changes of circumstances would naturally effect. Hence the slavery defender, in the case before us, proceeds upon the assumption that only as slaves are men the subjects of purchase and sale. But if I can prove that the phrase "bought with money," had reference in any case to some other condition than that of slavery, or even of a bond-servant, then the inference drawn from that phrase by the advocate of slavery falls to the ground. This I think can easily be done. In Leviticus xxv. 39 and 40, it will be seen that a Hebrew could not be made a bondman. "If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: but as an hired servant, and as a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the

year of jubilee.” And in the 42d verse it is expressly enjoined “they shall not be sold as bondmen.” How then were they sold? for if not sold as bondmen they certainly could not be sold as slaves, for although they might be bondmen without being slaves, they could not be slaves without being bondmen. So it appears they were to be sold as hired servants; of course it follows that the being “bought with money” is no evidence that they were slaves. And in the passage immediately under consideration, it appears that those who were not suffered to be bondmen were the very servants spoken of as being bought with money. But how then were they the subjects of sale? Their services for the time specified was paid for in advance, and hence when any one was to be redeemed, the reckoning had to be made “according to the time of an hired servant,” Lev. xxv. 50., and the amount paid back to his master. Such servants, whether native Hebrews or circumcised strangers, were not slaves, were not bondmen, nor were they hired servants although they rendered the service of yearly hired

servants. What then were they? They were regarded as members of the household, entitled to the privileges of the family, and hence they mingled in the congregation and were partakers of the pass-over, which their uncircumcised foreign servants and occasional hired servants could not do.

Exodus xx. 10, 17.

“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle that is within thy gates.” (See also Deut. v. 14.)

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.” (See also Deut. v. 21.)

As both these commandments apply with full force as regards servants that are hired, as much as bondmen, or as they could possibly do even in relation to slaves, so in them the language affords no evidence

favourable to slavery. The language does not imply any right to hold a man as a chattel. But on the contrary in interdicting covetousness it prohibits slavery so far as it may originate in cupidity and be maintained from the love of gain.

Exodus xxi. 2—6.

“If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself he shall go out by himself; if he were married then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.”

This passage is claimed as evidence that the law of Moses sanctioned slavery. To

“buy” a servant, it is supposed, is to buy a slave. But as it is the “Hebrew servant” that is here spoken of, the fact of his being a Hebrew cuts off at once the idea that a *slave* was intended, for as the law expressly prohibited the sale or purchase of a Hebrew as a bondman, (Leviticus xxv. 42 : “They shall not be sold as bondmen.” See also 2 Chron. xxviii. 8—15. Also, Neh. v. 5—12.) so the mere fact of *buying* him did not imply the condition of a bondman, and consequently not of a slave. The proslavery argument deduced from the purchase consequently fails.

Another form of expression that occurs in the paragraph, viz : “he shall serve him for ever,” is also claimed as indicative of slavery. But mark, it is still a *Hebrew* servant, and it was contrary to law for a Hebrew even to be a bondman. Where, then, rests the obligation ? Upon the master or upon the servant ? Evidently upon the master. He was bound by law to retain the servant whose wife and children he had any claim upon, when the servant himself so desired it. That is, the master

was bound by law, but the servant was bound by love. The master could not be released for ever, i. e. so long as he retained a claim upon the wife and children; and it was for the benefit of the servant, of his wife, and of his children, that the law was made. So far, therefore, from its being oppressive to the servant, or an enslavement of him, it was the security of his natural right to his wife and his children, and made a separation a voluntary act on his own part.

But perhaps the pro-slavery man asks, Were not the wife and the children slaves, since they were in circumstances that gave to the master still a claim, though the husband and the father were released? I answer, no—they need not be slaves. Their term of service might not have expired, as for instance, a man might have come in to serve six years; in two years time the master might get a claim upon a woman to serve him, on her part, six years—for remember that the woman had to be treated in such cases as the man, (see Deut. xv. 17,) she therefore would have yet two years to serve after the release of

the husband. Now then—if the husband could not redeem the time of his wife and her children, he may stay with them, and he, drawn also by affection to the master, may make that his home for ever, and the ear being pierced with the awl would be the evidence of his voluntary and affectionate service. It will hereafter be seen that provision was made by law for any subsequent change of treatment on the master's part, and which would release the servant from all oppression.

Exodus xxi, 7, 8, 9, 10.

“And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid servant, she shall not go out as the men servants do. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another *wife*, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these



three unto her, then shall she go out free without money."

Is there slavery or any oppression in this case? Certainly not in the mere fact of being a maid servant, for there always may be maid servants who are neither bond servants nor slaves, nor in any way oppressed. Nor in the fact of its being called a sale, for that was only a form of speech of that day signifying that for some value or supposed value received, a price was paid, whether it were absolute property, or temporary service, or a marriage agreement, ("Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife [widow] of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife," Ruth, iv. 10. "So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces," &c. Hos. iii. 6.) or some other consideration; and sometimes even it was called a sale where there was no price in money or any thing else paid, as God is said to have sold the Israelites to their enemies, and Israel to have sold themselves to do evil in sight of the Lord, and to have sold themselves for nought. (Judges ii. 14. 2 Kings xvii. 17. Isaiah lii 3.)

In the case under consideration, let it be

observed, it is the sale of a daughter by her father. Such a case was to be an exception to the general law, which required that the maid servant should be released in the given time on the same conditions as the man servant. (Deut. xv. 17.) But in the case where a man had sold "his daughter to be a maid servant," she was not to go out as the men servants did. And why so? The inference is obvious. She was purchased in the time of her minority, with the understanding that when marriageable she was to be the wife of her master or of his son. For it seems that if he did not marry her, it was considered as dealing with her deceitfully. If therefore, when she became marriageable, he did not marry her, he was not allowed to sell her except in the way of redemption. He could not sell her to a strange nation, as he might wish to do after he had dealt deceitfully with her. But he must allow her to be redeemed, i. e. all he could require was to have the money he had paid for her for the unexpired term of her service returned to him. If she were betrothed to the son instead of the

father, she was to be treated just as a daughter. But if the father or the son should absolutely marry her, and afterwards take another woman, the first was still to be his wife, and her food, her raiment, and even her duty of marriage must be not diminish. Should he refuse to recognize her any longer as a wife, he could not retain her as a maid servant, but she was to go out free without money, i. e. without being redeemed. The whole arrangement shews that the girl who on account of the poverty of her father had to be transferred to another, who was not her natural guardian, should have her natural rights protected by law, and herself saved from oppression and injury. I see nothing in the whole paragraph to allow the least apology for slavery, and I scarcely think any candid man will, upon examination, claim it as in any way favouring that condition.

Exodus xxi. 20, 21.

“And if a man smite his servant or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Not-

withstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money.”

There are two inferences drawn from this passage to favour the pro-slavery side of the question. The one is from the expression, “he is his money,” and the other, from the reference to the smiting of the servant by the masters.

I first notice the expression, “he is his money,” and readily meet the advocate of slavery with the remark that the loss of even a hired servant would oftentimes be the loss of money to the employer, and much more a loss, of course, if he had already paid him in advance, as was done when a man on account of his poverty, sold himself until the year of release. The loss, therefore, which the master would sustain in the death of his servant who died a day or two after being smitten, would be taken in evidence that the master did not intend to commit a homicide. If he had intended to kill the servant, he would probably have done it at once. The master, therefore, if tried for murder in a case where the servant lived a day or two,

would be acquitted; but if the servant died under his hand, i. e. immediately after his smiting him, then would the master be punished as a murderer. In the former case he would be acquitted. Why? Because the servant "is his money," i. e. it being to his interest not to kill him, it is presumable he did not intend to kill him. But this plea could not be put in when the death occurred on the spot, because notwithstanding the master's pecuniary interest in the servant, the immediate effect of the blow would be evidence that in his passion or malignity he was alike reckless of his own pecuniary interest and of the servant's life.

I admit that the evidence would be strong against the idea of intentional murder, in proportion to the amount of pecuniary interest the master had in the servant, and therefore that a slave would be more of a man's money probably than another sort of servant would be; but nevertheless this other servant is just as certainly money to the master as the slave is money.

But in the next place the slaveholder or

his advocate lays hold of the idea that the smiting of the servant by the master, was not a legal offence, and not punishable where there was no murder, and therefore he infers that the master had a right to whip his servant, and consequently that servant must have been a slave. I remark that if the master could whip his servant at *his own option*, under the Mosaic law, and the servant had no legal means of redress, upon evidence of unjustifiable treatment, then was that servant a slave until the year of release. But the law now under consideration does not imply any such state of things. That law had a specific object. That object was to settle the evidence in a trial for murder, under circumstances that did not apply in other cases of homicide. As regards the act of smiting the servant without death being the supposed consequence, nothing is said ; plainly because that was not the thing for which that particular law was enacted. But there were other laws which also related to injuries that a servant might sustain from being smitten by his master, besides having the redress at law

that any other man, not a servant, had a right to claim for his protection. That is to say, if a servant from a blow of his master lost his tooth, the master forfeited his rights in the servant, and accordingly he went free, whatever may have been his previous obligations; and the servant had at the same time the same right for any other damages that the law gave to any other man in Israel. For it was expressly enjoined in the Mosaic law, that there must be no respect of persons in judgment. It was to be eye for eye, tooth for tooth, &c., never mind who was the injured person, whether servant or free-man. The Israelites were all brethren, and under all circumstances to consider and treat one another as brethren—Israelites either by birth or naturalization. The employer and the employed, the master and the servant, were as to legal rights on a perfect equality; each had his right to appeal to the law if the other did not fulfill his part of the engagement.

Exodus xxi. 32.

“If the ox shall push a man servant or

maid servant, he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."

This payment to the master is supposed to favour the idea that slavery was the condition of the servant. But I cannot so view it. Why does the master in this case get the money? Plainly because the servant, although voluntarily or temporally one, being dead, the master loses the benefit of his services and ought therefore to be paid for it. But this is no satisfaction to the law of murder. It only satisfies a private claim for damages. Nevertheless, under another specific law, it may be tried as a case of murder, (Exodus xx. 28—30.) and the owner of the ox was liable to pay the penalty with his life.

Exodus xxii. 3.

"If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."

This did not make the man a slave. He had, after his sale, the same rights to protection and redress by law, as any other man. But being too poor to make the legal restitution, he must make it up by



labouring in the capacity of a servant, not a slave, until the amount was made good; that is, if he stole a sheep, his services to the amount of four sheep must be sold,—if an ox, then to the amount of five oxen, &c. There is no oppression in this, no slavery.

Leviticus xix. 20.

“And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman that is a bondmaid, betrothed to a husband, and not at all redeemed nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged: they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.”

Here we have the case of a bondmaid, consequently not a Hebrew, but a heathen, for the law expressly enjoined that no Hebrew should be compelled to serve as a bondservant, nor be sold as a bondman, but it was said, “Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you,” (Leviticus xxv. 39, 42, 44.) This therefore must be a case of a heathen girl, whom an Israelite has obtained of a stranger, her father, with the promise of

marrying her, of course upon the compliance, in proper time, with the requisitions of the Jewish law. In the mean time she suffers herself to be carnally lain with by her master. Were she a free woman, both she and the man would suffer death. But she is yet a heathen legally, and besides, her services are due to her master until her term of service expires, or he marries her. Under these circumstances it would seem to be too great a punishment for such a one, to suffer death. She was therefore scourged. But that which made her crime the less aggravated, also diminished the criminality of him who had lain with her, and he too, instead of suffering death, should take a ram to the priest, and offer it for a trespass offering, and then the sin should be forgiven him. But suppose he did not make this religious atonement, what then? Evidently, his sin, not being forgiven him, he must take such consequences as the law imposed.

But to the point of consideration. Was this girl a slave? Evidently not. If scourged, it was not at the will of her master, but by legal process. Nor was

her bondage permanent, for she was betrothed to her master, and was to be his wife, or if not his wife, or not redeemed, she was to go out free "without money." All this is implied in the text, for it evidently has reference to the law recorded in Exodus xxi. 7—10. Where then was there any oppression, any thing like slavery in the condition of the woman? Suppose a law should be enacted in one of the American slave states, making it penal for a slave woman to have carnal communication with her master, and the penalty should be that the woman be scourged, and the man be fined the value of a ram, and be required to go before an ecclesiastical tribunal, and make confession, would it not be regarded as a severe blow against slavery itself? Would it not be thought that the state enacting such a law was making a considerable advance towards the emancipation of her slave population? At all events, it would scarcely be considered an oppressive act, thus to guard the purity of a slave. It perhaps might be objected by some, that the oppression lies in the fact, that the woman, not being

free, but being forced by the master from the fear of punishment, nevertheless suffers the penalty of the law. But what would she fear? Chastisement by her master. To counteract this apprehension, she is made to fear *legal* chastisement if she submits to her master's wishes without crying out. Such a law, therefore, enacted in a slave state, would be humane, and entirely inconsistent with the general slave code. But it was perfectly consistent with the Mosaic code, and is only confirmatory evidence that the bondmaid was not a slave.

I may have mistaken the character of this law so far as to the inference or supposition that the woman was betrothed to her master. It is possible that the same law would have applied to cases in which the bondmaid was betrothed to some other than her master, and in which her master, or any one else, may have been the partner of her crime. My own presumption, however, is otherwise, and that except in the case as I have above stated it, the penalty would have been death. But be this as it may, these things are evident,—

this bondmaid was subject to redemption or to freedom, if she were turned off from being a wife ; and her purity was legally guarded. There is no evidence of an oppressed condition, nor any thing indicative of slavery.

Leviticus xxii. 10—13.

“ There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing : a sojourner of the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house : they shall eat of his meat.”

The buying any soul with money, and the being born in the house, are regarded by the pro-slavery advocate as a provision of slavery. But both these expressions were employed in those days in cases where the idea of slavery is obviously excluded—as in Exodus xxi. 2—6, a Hebrew servant is spoken of as being bought, whereas a Hebrew could in no case be made even a bondman, much less a slave. “ They shall not be sold as bondmen.” Lev. xxv. 42. And the same law that set

a Hebrew man free on the seventh year, applied equally to the Hebrew woman. Such servants, of course, within the term of their service, might have children born in their master's house. There is therefore nothing in the passage under consideration to warrant the idea that slavery was a legal institution among the Jews.

Leviticus xxv. 6.

“And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee.”

This classification of servants is thought by the slaveholder to indicate that some were slaves and some were hired. But it would be sufficient to deny this, and to require him to prove it. That there were other than hired servants is true. But instead of being slaves, they were servants; having such connection with the master and his family as gave them privileges, nay rights, above those of hired servants, and they became free at the end of six years, or sooner, or being bondmen (not

slaves) from among the heathen, they went out free in the year of jubilee, if they did not become free long before by virtue of their conformity to the Jewish religion. Although there were bondmen, they had such rights in law as to secure them from oppression, consequently they were not slaves, for where there is no oppression there is no slavery. The being bound for a term of years indicates either an implied or expressed contract, and a breach of the contract on the part of the master, released the other party from his obligations, and hence he had only to leave his master in such case, and go to another place, and every Israelite was bound to receive him and protect him from recovery by his former master. (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.)

Leviticus xxv. 39.

“And if thy brother, that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: but as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee:

And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God."

The sale in this case is the only expression that would indicate any thing like slavery in the condition of this servant. But the 47th verse of the same chapter, explains how a sale might have occurred. The man reduced to poverty sells himself. Of course then he made his own terms to serve his employer or master. But he could not be purchased as a bondman, as the passage itself shows. This evidently was no slavery, although there was a sale. It is unnecessary to dwell upon it.

Leviticus xv. 44, 45, 46.

"Both thy bondmen and bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you: of them shall ye buy bondmen and bond-



maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever; but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour."

I shall not avail myself here, of the advantages which more learned criticism would give me, by reference to the original Hebrew. It would not be adapted to the generality of those for whose conviction I make the examination. I take therefore the translation as it is, and give the slaveholder and his advocate the full benefit of it. Let me admit, then, that these servants, obtained from among the heathen, were bondmen and bondmaids as the translation has it,—that they were purchased,—that they became a possession of the master, and an inheritance for his children, and that forever. Admitting all this, I now deny that they were slaves.

Being bondmen did not make them slaves. Slavery necessarily implies an oppressed condition. A slave is one in the power of another, whom he is compelled to serve without the means of redress when wronged. Others may choose to define slavery to be something else, but this is the condition against which I am arguing. And I now deny that the bondmen and bondmaids of the Hebrews were legally in that condition. The law, on the contrary, secured their natural rights, and was their safeguard against oppression. To it they could appeal, and by it be redressed.

They were purchased; but who sold them? There is no authority given in the law for any man to sell them. If there were a theft committed, the civil magistrate might sell the thief for so long a time as might have been necessary to make the legal restitution, in case he could not make the restitution otherwise. But this would be a temporary arrangement, and the penalty of crime. It is therefore not applicable to the case under consideration. Again I ask, *who* was authorized to sell those bondmen and bondmaids? A father

sometimes was said to sell his daughter for a handmaid; but it was, so far as we learn, a mode of providing for her support and her marriage to him who purchased her, or to his son. This, of course, was not slavery, nor does it apply entirely to the law now under consideration. By whom then was this sale of heathen men and women to be made? There was a distinct law, "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Exodus xxi. 16. Here was a law against all kidnapping. One man therefore could not have another in his possession to sell him, by any means provided for by the Jewish law. But a man might sell himself. (Lev. xxv. 47.) In this way might the Jews have obtained bondmen of the heathen. They bought them when the poor heathen men or women sold themselves. We have no evidence that under the law of Moses, any man had a right to purchase even a heathen into bondage, except when one sold himself. But if a man sold himself, it must have been for some consideration. If so, then there was a contract be-

tween himself and his purchaser. That supposes legal power on the part of the servant, as well as the master. He could demand that the terms of the obligation be complied with. So long as the master fulfilled his engagement, by which he bound himself and his children, so long would the bondman be obliged to fulfil his engagement.

But, however the master might have come into possession of a bondman, the law secured to the bondman a redress of grievances.

1st. If a master maimed his servant, all obligation on the part of the servant ceased, and he went free. (Exodus xxi. 26, 27.)

2d. The chastity of the female received legal protection. (Leviticus xix. 20—22.)

3d. A bondman, if he so desired, could eat of the holy thing, when circumcised, and thus was placed upon an equality with a native Hebrew, and when thus incorporated into the Hebrew church, he would no longer serve as a bondman, and could have his full freedom after serving six years. (Lev. xxii. 10—13. Lev. xxiv.

22.) It is recorded that the *heathen* on one occasion did thus secure themselves against injury. (Esther viii. 17.)

4th. He had the benefit of this law, "Thou shalt not deliver up to his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best." (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.)

5th. Whilst there were laws enacted for the special benefit of servants, they likewise had the full protection which all other laws afforded to those who were not engaged in service. No distinctions are made to favour the master at the expense of the servant, for the law had no respect of persons. If the servant suffered an injury from his master or any one else, he had recourse to the law as certainly as any other man had. His testimony was as good as his master's. His rights were equally respected. His master and himself were equally bound by their expressed or implied respective obligations. The Mosaic laws, as to this question, were

made with strict regard to the brotherhood of man.

6th. To make the bondman perfectly secure from slavery, there was an express law providing against the oppression of strangers. "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;" and to make the matter plain that it had reference to their bondmen, it is added: "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Lev. xix. 34.) "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxii. 21.) And frequent appeals were made to the Jews in behalf of the strangers in their land whilst reminding them that they were once bondmen in the land of Egypt, thus guarding their servants from all oppression. In view of these arrangements, it is perfectly clear to my own mind that in the Mosaic law now under consideration, however their bondmen may have been considered an inheritance for them and their children, they were not slaves.

I have in thus discussing the matter,

made no appeal to the original Hebrew. The learned scholar may ascertain for himself that the terms "bondmen and bondmaids," are in the Hebrew the words elsewhere translated servants. He may also satisfy himself that what in our translation reads, "They shall be your bondmen forever," should have been translated "Forever of these shall ye serve yourselves," the term "forever" referring rather to the perpetuity of the regulation than to the permanence of the inheritance in individual slaves. (See Deut. xxiii. 3, for the use of the word forever. — "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord: even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever.")

But in addition to all this, I remark that these servants could not be retained in service longer than to the year of jubilee. "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." (Lev. xxv. 10.)

Leviticus xxv. 47—55.

And if a sojourner or a stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwell

eth by him wax poor and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family : after that he is sold he may be redeemed again : one of his brethren may redeem him : either his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him ; or if he be able he may redeem himself. And he shall reckon with him that bought him, from the year that he was sold to him, unto the year of jubilee ; and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him : and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight. And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his



children with him. For unto me the children of Israel are servants, they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

In this same chapter, from the 39th to the 43d verses, the case of the sale of a Hebrew to a Hebrew is regarded and regulated. Here we have the sale of a Hebrew to one not a Hebrew. The regulations appear to have been the same in both cases. In the latter case, however, the mode of sale and of the redemption is more detailed; and therefore it affords the better opportunity to judge of the character of the transaction.

First. The man sells himself, nevertheless the form of expression throughout is precisely the same as if sold from one master to another.

Secondly. The price of the servant was regulated by his value yearly, as a yearly hired servant, and this was paid the servant in advance.

Thirdly. The servant evidently had opportunity of acquiring property for himself after his sale, for this is implied in the

expression, "If he be able he may redeem himself."

Fourthly. He could be redeemed at any time, either by some friend or by himself, upon returning whatever he had received in advance for the remaining years of the term of service.

Fifthly. He was to serve, not as a slave, nor as a bondman, nor as an occasional hired servant, but "a yearly hired servant," and all rigorous rule was forbidden.

Sixthly. In the year of jubilee, if not before, he was restored to full freedom, "both he and his children with him."

These arrangements being a defence against all oppression, and altogether so unlike any thing in slavery, it would seem to be straining a point vastly to make the condition of the Hebrew servant subserve the interest of the slaveholder.

In Leviticus the freedom of the servant at the end of six years, seems to be overlooked. I judge, therefore, that these arrangements or regulations in Leviticus, relate only to those, who after the end of six years made arrangements to serve until the year of jubilee, and if so it would es-

tablish the fact that notwithstanding the ceremony of boring the ear, the servant was still at liberty to leave his master at any time he might refund whatever may have been paid him in advance. It was, perhaps, so regulated that the servant should have first a trial of his master for six years before he could make any arrangement for a longer term. I know not well how else to harmonize the law as given in Exodus with that in Leviticus. I am aware that there are commentators who say that the law in Exodus relates to those who were sold for theft or for debt, and in Leviticus to those who 'sold themselves. But there is nothing in the law allowing a creditor to sell his debtor, and for a theft one had to serve only so long as was necessary to make the legal restitution which he could not pay otherwise.

It is unfortunate for the cause of liberty and human rights, that the generality of commentators have given this subject too little investigation to be accurate, and have most reprehensibly assisted thereby in riveting the chains of the slave, and at the same time have given occasion to many

to question the authority of the Mosaic law ; for no one who has his eyes opened to the wrongs of slavery, can for a moment believe that God would sanction such a condition, however in his providence he may for *his* own wise purposes allow even the wicked to be tyrants and to oppress their fellow men until the measure of their iniquity be filled.

Deuteronomy xv. 12—18.

“And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years ; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty : Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine press : of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee : therefore I command thee this thing to day. And it shall be if he say unto thee, I will not go away

from thee ; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee : then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also unto thy maid servant thou shalt do likewise. It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee : for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee in serving thee six years.”

Suppose a law similar to this should be enacted by the Legislature of South Carolina in relation to the coloured population, would it not be regarded an act of manumission? Without doubt it would. How then can the slaveholder claim this Jewish law as evidence that slavery has the sanction of Jehovah? It is so utterly at variance with the slave code, that it is surprising it should ever be referred to by the advocate of slavery.

1st. We have no evidence that the law allowed any master to sell his servant. A man may have sold himself (Leviticus xxv. 47) ; or an officer of the law may have sold a thief to serve long enough to make legal restitution if he were not able

to make the restitution otherwise. But in this latter case, there was only a sale of services for a limited time; and that as a penalty for crime; and therefore not at all applicable to the present discussion. In the former case, that of a man selling himself, it was on his part a voluntary act, and yet the terms employed are precisely the same as though he were sold by a master. Nothing, therefore, can be inferred to favour the pro-slavery side of the question from the mere fact of a sale.

2d. The service at first was limited to six years, and at the end of that time he was to receive from his master a liberal proportion of what there was in the flock, the barn, the wine press, and any thing else that the master had been blessed with. In the mean time he had all the benefit of the Jewish laws, to guard him from imposition and oppression.

3d. If at the end of the six years he preferred to remain with his master, because he loved him, and loved his house, the master could not turn him off, but was bound to let him remain in his service. But that the master might have, as it were,

a certificate that he did not force him to remain, and did not oppress him, but that it was a voluntary and affectionate service, the servant submitted to have his ears bored.

If in all this arrangement there can be found any thing like slavery I have not the penetration to perceive it. Nor can I believe that any candid mind, after a careful examination can think that this Mosaic law gives any countenance to any involuntary servitude, or was a regulation at all oppressive in its character.

And let a fair and full examination of all the laws of Moses be made, and it seems to me that the candid mind will have to admit that there is nothing therein from beginning to end, that tolerates or gives the slightest countenance to slavery. If the Jews made slaves of their fellow men or oppressed them in any way, it was not because their law, given by Moses, allowed such a state of things, but it was without law, and directly contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the law. The nearest approach to it is to be found in the directions about captives being taken in

war. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then shall it be, that all the people that is found therein, shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee."

This, at first sight, may have the appearance of oppression, that a people agreeing to peace should be nevertheless made subject to tribute. But whatever objections may be made against war, it does not necessarily follow that because a people are made tributaries to another nation, therefore they are oppressed, and that personally they are without the means of redress. Let it be recollected that the people thus to be brought in subjection, were such as were enemies to the Jews, who, in consequence of their hostile acts, might bring the Jewish army against them. For their own safety the Hebrews might bring this hostile nation under their civil authority; this being attended with expense, taxes must be levied. A tribute going no farther than justice demanded would not be oppression, and I take it that no more than



this was allowable under the sanction of the Mosaic law.

But it seems, that in case their enemies would not come to terms of peace, then another law was to be enforced, "And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it : and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword : but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself." (Deut. xx. 12—14.) This was the law in reference to the hostile nations afar off. But of the nations immediately about them, the Canaanites, &c., another law was to prevail. Of these it was ordered ; "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." They could not therefore make slaves or servants of the aborigines of the country. Men, women, children and all, must be utterly destroyed. Of the distant nations with whom they fought, they were to destroy all the men, consequently they could not make slaves of the men - But the women and little

ones could be carried away as captives, (see Num. xxxi. 9.) But why were these to be carried off as captives? Evidently because the men being destroyed, the women and children required protection. But were they allowed to make slaves of them, or to bring them into oppressive service? Not at all. These women and little ones would have all the advantages and protection of the Hebrew laws. If they became conformists to the Jewish religion, they were immediately entitled to all its national, civil, and social advantages. If they did not, but still remained as strangers in the land, this law threw its shield around them—"Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him," (Exodus xxii. 21.) They therefore could not possibly be legally enslaved, because if there were no oppression, there could be no slavery, for a slave is one compelled to serve another without the means of redress when wronged.

I trust that in this examination of the law of Moses, I have made the matter so plain, that no one who has followed me can be disposed to call in question the fair-

ness of my deductions. I am sure I have not sought by ingenuity to force the scriptures to sustain my own views. It would answer me no good purpose to delude myself with a fanciful interpretation, nor could I hope to produce any permanent conviction in the minds of others, if I did not feel the assurance that I had candidly and fairly sought out and ascertained the truth.



## CHAPTER V.

### HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

Joshua ix. 23, 27.

“Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the house of my God.”

“And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.”

Admitting that the Gibeonites, who were thus treated, were thereby oppressed

and enslaved, (although it does not follow, because they were hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God, that they were slaves;) admitting it, I say, still there is no divine sanction of slavery. Look at the history of the transaction, and it will be seen that the Jews in this case acted without asking "counsel at the mouth of the Lord." Joshua ix. 14. According to the history, God had directed that of those people, including the Gibeonites, every thing that breathed should be killed. When therefore they spared their lives and made bondmen of them, they acted in direct violation of the command that had been given them. It is therefore in this discussion unimportant to inquire into the nature or conditions of the bondage or service imposed upon them. The history affords no evidence that Joshua and the rulers had any right to make the regulation they did. It affords no divine sanction of slavery.

2 Samuel xii. 31.

"And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws,

and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon.”

Whether David put these people to a horrible death, or into a severe bondage, is not a settled question. But whichever it was, there is no reason to believe he had the divine sanction for it. Elisha's direction to the king of Israel in relation to the captives was in a very different spirit. He directed them to be fed and sent back to their king or master.” 2 Kings vi. 22, 23.

1 Kings ix. 20, 21, 22.

“And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond-service unto this day. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots,

and his horsemen.” (See also 2 Chron. viii. 7, 8, 9.)

Whence did Solomon get his authority for making bondmen of those whom the Israelites had spared? Certainly God had never authorized it, for his command was express respecting these people; “Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.” This tribute of bond-service, therefore, that was imposed upon them, was entirely without the divine sanction.

There is, however, in this passage something worthy of notice. In the 21st verse it is implied that some of these people were “of the children of Israel,” and were consequently exempted from this bond-service. How are we to understand this, otherwise than that they had become incorporated into the Hebrew nation? If so, then there is in this, confirmation that those who, from among the heathen, became Jews in their customs, were treated as Jews, and consequently could not be in any sort of bondage, legally. Every one, therefore, had the opportunity to deliver himself from bondage, by abandoning idol-

atry, and conforming himself to the confession and worship of the true God.

I take no advantage of the fact that those of whom Solomon levied a bond-service were not brought into a condition of entire slavery, but were only engaged on the public works. For although it was only a tribute, and that tribute may have been comparatively light, yet the principle was the same, whether the oppression were less or more : and whatsoever was the amount of their toil, those people were not thus made tributaries by the command of God ; and from their condition, therefore, nothing can be argued in favour of slavery.

2 Kings iv. 1.

“ Now there cried a certain woman, of the wives of the sons of the prophets, unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant, my husband, is dead ; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord : and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.”

But this creditor had not the least right to take her sons for bondmen. For, in the

first place, the law explicitly required him to relieve them. "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger or sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase." (Lev. xxv. 35, 36.) And in the next place it was equally explicit; "They shall not be sold as bondmen." (Lev. xxv. 42.)

Job vii. 2, 3.

"As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work, so am I made to possess months of vanity."

The only point here upon which the advocate of slavery could make a question, would be the distinction between a servant and a hireling. But admitting, for the mere sake of concession, that "slave" is meant by "servant," the passage could prove no more than that there were such a class of men as slaves in the world, which no one pretends to deny. But there is nothing here expressed to justify such a condition. I suppose, however, that other



servants than slaves earnestly desire the shadow. It is not, however, worth our attention to dwell upon this passage. It can prove nothing either way.

Jeremiah ii. 14.

“Is Israel a servant? is he a home-born slave? why is he spoiled?”

The word slave here, is in our Bibles printed in italics, which signifies that it is not in the original Hebrew, but was introduced by King James' translators. To read the text without the italicised words, it would be, “Israel a servant? he a home-born? why is he spoiled?” Whatever may be the import here of the terms “servant,” and “home-born,” I do not see that there is any thing that implies the slightest sanction or toleration of slavery. On the contrary, it seems to be expressive of indignation at the very idea of Israel being a servant at all, whether home-born or otherwise. I presume the passage would scarcely attract attention on the question of slavery, but from the fact of the word “*slave*” being introduced into the text. It is the only place in all the

Old Testament where the word occurs, and I thank God it was not introduced by the prophet himself, but by uninspired translators.

---

The following are some of the incidental reasons for inferring that the servants among the Jews were not slaves in the full sense of this term.

1st. Saul and his servant when they went to hunt the mules, sat together in Samuel's parlour with thirty other persons, and Saul and his servant had the chiefest place among them. (1 Samuel ix. 22.)

2d. Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, had himself twenty servants; and Ziba and his fifteen sons, and his twenty servants, together tilled the land for Mephibosheth. (2. Sam. ix. 9—12.)

3d. Job's servants contended with him for their rights, and he admitted the justice of their claims. (Job xxxi. 13.) He also paid his servants money for the fruits of his land. (Job xxxi. 38, 39.) And to his maidens he probably made presents

for their entertainment and pleasure. (Job xli. 5.)

4th. When Gehazi the servant of Elisha received from Naaman a large amount of money, evidently to appropriate it to his own use, his master chided him for seeking wealth, and for desiring to have "men servants and maid servants" at such a time of calamity, implying that a servant could have servants.

5th. Tobiah the servant is named frequently in Nehemiah with circumstances that are incompatible with the idea of slavery.

6th. Nehemiah's servants were armed. (Nehemiah iv. 16.)

7th. Even the "Nethenims" and the "children of Solomon's servants who were made tributary in bond service, had for themselves possessions. (Neh. xi. 3 )

8th. Sheshan, a descendant of Judah, gave his daughter for a wife to his servant Jarha, an Egyptian. (1 Chr. ii. 34, 35.)

9th. Add to these foregoing considerations the fact that the Jews were strictly forbidden in their law to be in any way

oppressive, either to their brethren the Jews or to any strangers in their land, and that with frequent appeals to them to remember that they had been bondmen in the land of Egypt, and how the Lord had delivered them.

---

Having now examined every thing in the Old Testament that the slaveholder or his advocate could possibly suppose favourable to his views and his practice, I cannot but flatter myself that every one who has followed me carefully and candidly, must admit that there is not one word or syllable that can be fairly interpreted to imply God's sanction of slavery. Starting with a false and delusive definition of what slavery is, some may deceive themselves with the idea that slavery existed, and was tolerated and justified with the divine approbation, among the Jews. But when we fully understand what it is we are seeking after, and have a sincere desire for truth, and truth only, it is utterly impossible to fix the mind upon a single passage from the first of Genesis to the

last of Malachi, and feel secure in saying here is slavery with the sanction of Jehovah.

Whatever may be thought of the law of Moses in reference to other subjects, as for instance, war, capital punishment, polygamy, &c., I do not well see how as to the regulations about servants it could be well improved. Even as regards the strangers who became their servants, call them bond servants if you please, I do not think there could have been a more humane arrangement adopted. It is true that if they continued to be idolaters, they were permitted to extend their service to the year of jubilee, but, this service was not allowed to be an oppressive one, neither does it appear to have been permitted to be entered upon involuntarily. It was a service that afforded them protection, gave them support, shielded them from imposition whilst they were aliens, and gave them the best facilities for learning the principles of that religion which the Mosaic law was designed to establish, and the adoption of which would at once

have opened to them all the benefits of the Hebrew government and citizenship.

Suppose a law of this kind should prevail in the United States. No native or naturalized American shall be suffered to remain an apprentice or be a servant longer than six years, unless after the six years he voluntarily renews his engagement; but a foreigner who refuses to give his allegiance to the government, may contract to remain in service so long as he holds himself an alien, having however the protection of law to which he may appeal when he suffers wrong. Would this be a bad law? It strikes me that so far from its being oppressive, it would be the dictate of a sound policy as a protection to the said alien. Such I conceive to have been the character of the Mosaic law. If the Jews disregarded its spirit, and transgressed its letter, that was another matter. It was their own wickedness; and their transgression of the law ought never to be a justification for another people to violate the rights of man and the laws of Deity.

## CHAPTER VI.

## EXAMINATION OF THE GOSPELS.

I now turn to the New Testament. After the most careful examination, I am prepared to affirm without the fear of candid and successful contradiction, that there is not a single instance in which the word *servant* is used in the sense of *slave*.

In one place the expression, "*servants under the yoke*," occurs, but the very fact that the words "under the yoke" are added to qualify the word "servant," shows that without some such qualification, the idea of their real condition would not be conveyed.

In a single place also in the New Testament, the word "slaves" occurs, but in a connection by no means favourable to slavery, and where indeed the true signification is *bodies*, and not slaves. It is in Revelations xviii. 13, "slaves, and souls of men," meaning '*bodies and souls of men*.' It is alluding to the merchandise

of the bodies and souls of men, by the merchants of the mystic Babylon; and of course whether "bodies" or "slaves," be a proper translation, the text, if it mean any thing, means a condemnation of the merchants of this Babylon, and cannot be quoted in justification of slavery itself.

It does not appear that our Saviour ever came in contact with slavery, except in the extended sense of an oppressive government under Imperial Rome. But no one will pretend that he ever gave the slightest sanction to national slavery or to any oppressive form of government. Whether he ever came in contact with individual slaveholding, so that an expression of his will on the subject would have been called for, cannot be made to appear from any thing in any of the four gospels. On the contrary, in those allusions to servants from which any safe inference may be drawn as to the kind of servants meant, it is sufficiently plain that they could not have been slaves. Now let us take these in their historical order.



Matthew vi. 24. Luke xvi. 13.

“No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.”

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

The allusion here is to *masters*, in the sense of *lords*, as one acquainted with Greek would readily understand, and not in the sense of ordinary proprietors of estates. It is the adhesion of a subject to a king or nobleman. The text itself shews that slaves cannot be intended, since the man is represented as making his choice, to which lord or master he should adhere.

Matthew viii. 5—13. Luke vii. 2—10.

“And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy,

grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man Go, and he goeth; and to another Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self same hour."

"And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he

sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."

The servant who was sick was a child, as a Greek scholar would readily admit. "My little son," instead of "my servant," would have been a more literal translation. Luke represents him as a servant "who was dear unto him," and also as a little son. But I cannot here undertake to prove this; because I am addressing many who do not understand Greek. But no candid scholar will deny it after consulting his Greek Testament,

But the centurion had at least one servant—as is evident from the 9th verse. But what sort of a servant was he? Was he a slave? There is no proof of it—not the slightest. The case of the centurion, therefore, cannot be used in defence of slavery.

Matthew x. 24, 25.

"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord; if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household."

It cannot be claimed here that the term *servant* means *slave*. On the contrary, a certain degree of equality seems to be admitted between the master and the servant. It is *enough for the servant that he be as his lord*. This ranks him with his lord. He ought not to expect more than this; but to this extent he may be regarded. This shews to my own mind that the idea of the servant being a slave was not in the mind of Jesus when he used the language of the text. He was rather representing a great man with voluntary adherents, who constituted his household, just as the devils constitute the household of Beelzebub, or as the disciples constituted the household of Jesus.

Matthew xii. 27, 28.

“So the servants of the householder came,”

“The servants said unto him,” &c.

No inference can be drawn from this about the condition of servants.

Matthew xiv. 1, 2.

“At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard

of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants," &c.

The familiarity of Herod with his servants, implies that they were probably his officers, attendants or suite.

Matthew xviii. 23—34.

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and

besought him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.”

In every instance in this parable, of the occurrence of the word servant, it is perfectly evident that it does not there signify slave. The idea is just this : One holding an official station under the government of a king, was found to be a defaulter to the amount of ten thousand talents. This man is called a servant. By his “fellow servant,” and “fellow servants,” were meant his fellow subjects of that kingdom. In the use of the term “servant,” there-

fore, is not embraced the idea of slavery. But this subject of the king was ordered to be sold, together with his wife and children. Yet it does not appear in the text, what word would have been employed to signify their condition after the sale, had they been sold. The man was called a servant while yet free. What would be his condition, and that of his wife and children after their sale, we might infer to be slavery. But the word *servant* is not employed in the parable to signify that condition. The only opportunity, therefore, for the advocate of slavery to catch the idea of that condition is found in the order of a sale. But let it be observed that in the case of the other debt, the debt of one subject to another, the creditor does not have the debtor sold, but only cast into prison. The sale of the first, therefore, must be regarded as an official act, under the order of government, being the sale of a defaulter, after due process of law, for crime of which he was duly convicted. He was pardoned subsequently by the king. Still it will perhaps be said that such a government is an oppressive one,



where a king can order not only the guilty man, but his wife and children also, to be sold, and that the subjects of such a government are virtually slaves. But did Jesus intend by the parable to sanction such an absolute monarchy? Certainly not. The design of the parable was the very reverse. It was that kings and all else should, from their hearts, forgive "every one his brother their trespasses." He gives no intimation of approval, either of such a form of government, or of the king's conduct in ordering the sale of the man or his family. His purpose was fully answered, whether the king did right or wrong, for he only designed to shew that with what measure men meted, God would measure to them again, and therefore they ought to treat one another as brethren.

Matthew xxi. 33—36. Mark xii. 2—5.

• Luke xx. 9—12.

“There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and

when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.”

“And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty. And again, he sent unto them another servant: and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled. And again he sent another,; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.”

“Then began he to speak to the people this parable. A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent *him* away

empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast *him* out."

Whether mere collectors were called servants in this case, or not, we cannot determine; but I infer these *servants* were not *slaves*, from the very fact that they were allowed, nay commissioned to collect the proprietor's rents upon a large estate. Mere servants could not have been thus trusted.

Matthew xxii. 2—13. Luke xiv. 16—24.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, an-

other to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bring to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper-time, to

say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife: and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper."

Were these servants of this king *slaves*? There is no reason to suppose that they

were. Kings would not be likely to employ *slaves* in such business. It would require persons of distinction and high rank. But it is not important to dwell upon this parable, as there is nothing in it which could be tortured to signify an approval of, or connivance at slavery, by Jesus Christ.

Matthew xxiv. 45—51. Luke xii. 42—48.

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming: and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“And the Lord said, Who then is that

faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season. Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming: and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

If it be considered that Jesus Christ is

here speaking of himself and his appointed ministers, it will at once be understood that by the servants in this place were not meant slaves. The expressions too, "cut him asunder," and "appoint him his portion with the hypocrites," and "unbelievers," imply the separation of the servant from the household of the lord. He could no longer be recognized as a servant, but must go off among those who are unfaithful, there to weep and gnash his teeth with remorse for having brought himself into such a condition.

What is added in Luke about inflicting "stripes," would probably, in the American Republic, give the inference that these servants were slaves, but in other countries, and especially in ancient times, it was not unusual for masters to use the rod, even upon those who were hired servants; but whilst this was probably the case among the Jews, it was under restrictions that secured the servant against undeserved and oppressive punishment. The additional observations recorded by Luke therefore, do not alter the inference that these parabolic servants were not slaves.



Matthew xxv. 14—30.

“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one : to every man according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold I have gained besides them, five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also

that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents ; behold I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed : and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed : thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him which hath not, shall be taken from him

even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Were these servants *slaves*? I think not, because the amount entrusted to their care was too much to be placed into the hands of slaves. A single talent could not have been less than fifteen hundred dollars if of silver, and if of gold, not less than twenty-five thousand dollars. There was therefore entrusted to one of these servants which had five talents, not less than seven or eight thousand dollars. Would any master entrust that much money in the hands of a slave, and go off and leave him? Again, these “servants” were merchants, they were not therefore likely to be slaves. And finally this unprofitable servant was to be cast out “into outer darkness,” that is, no longer allowed to be a servant, but left to weep and gnash his teeth on account of his want and destitution, and from remorse.

The word servant evidently, to my mind, was used in this case as it was frequently used in ancient times to signify

any one who did business for another. If it were now used as in former days, it would apply to a commission merchant, factor, or other agent who might be employed to transact the business of another; and indeed it is not even now entirely in disuse in this sense, and hence it is common for many to subscribe their names to letters, as the servants of those to whom they write.

Matthew xxvi. 51. Mark xiv. 47.

John xviii. 10.

“And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear.”

“And one of them that stood by, drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.”

“Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.”

It does not appear that this servant was a slave, but the probability is he was not, first, because the high priest had no right

under the law, to hold men in perpetual bondage ; and secondly, because it is not probable a mere slave would have been thus prominent in the execution of an official act.

Mark xiv. 65. John xviii. 18, 26.

“ And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.”

“ And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals ; (for it was cold) and they warmed themselves ; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.”

“ One of the servants of the high priest (being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?”

There is no reason to infer that these servants were slaves. They were the high priest's servants, and under the Jewish law he had no right to hold men in perpetual bondage, or to oppress them in any way.

Luke. xv. 22.

“ But the father said to his servants,”  
&c.

“And he called one of his servants”  
&c.

These were the servants of the prodigal’s father. We have no account that he had any *slaves* ; but the prodigal himself spake of his father’s “hired servants.” The inference is he had no slaves.

Luke xvii. 7—10.

“But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat ? And will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink ? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him ? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.”

A servant who receives wages for his services, may with much more accuracy charge himself with doing no more than

it was his duty to do, than a slave who is conscious that all he does for his master is that much gratuitous or rather forced labour. I, therefore, feel more safe in the inference that slaves were not at the time in the mind of Jesus.

Luke xix. 12—27.

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first and said, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second

came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin, for I feared thee because thou art an austere man ; thou takest up that thou laidest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow : wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming, I might have required mine own with usury ? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given ; and from him that hath not, even that he hath, shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.”



The amount placed into the hands of these servants was about four hundred dollars each. Is it likely that so much money would be distributed among slaves to trade with? Again, these servants were appointed governors of cities. Surely, it will not be argued that our Saviour had slaves in mind in uttering this parable. I infer from the use of the term "servant" in this place, that the word was employed to signify any one appointed or employed as the agent of another in trade or any thing else, as a clerk, or factor, or commission merchant, supercargo, or any other agency.

---

I have now gone through the four gospels, and have not found a single instance in which the word "*servant*" could be fairly regarded as implying "*slave*," nor can we find the slightest intimation of Jesus Christ's approval of or connivance at *slavery*. There is no evidence whatever that he came in contact with a slaveholder at any time, nor that there was ever given him an occasion to make the ownership of slaves a subject of specific observation.

There are expressions in the gospel from which I cannot but infer that slavery did not prevail in Judea, at all events, to such an extent as to call for more notice than many other things that are not alluded to at all, and yet upon the criminality of which there could be no doubt.

Jesus said (John viii. 34, 35, 36), "Who-soever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Now, if *slaves* were called servants, how would it be made to appear that "the servant abideth not in the house forever?" It was the temporary character of the service or bondage, that gave force to his language. Under the Mosaic law, even bondmen were only temporarily such. The year of jubilee set all free. And those that were in bond service from other nations must have been very few in number; for Jesus implies in his parable about the labourers in the vineyard, that it was the custom to hire labourers, (Matthew xx. 1—15.) and in the parable of the prodigal son, he

names none others than "hired servants." In his parable of the unjust steward, the steward was evidently not a slave. It is recorded that when Jesus dined with Mary and Martha, the latter served alone—of course they had no slaves. When Jesus was accosted by the rich young man and asked what he should do, he said "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor." How incongruous would this advice be to a man, a part of whose wealth consisted of slaves! But if slavery were the condition of servants, is it likely that this rich man would have been without slaves? Again Jesus said, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Why, if slavery existed among that people as a legitimate institution, were not slaves mentioned as well as houses and lands? If servants were property, surely it must have been as great a sacrifice to give them up for Christ's sake, as to give up any other property. But such *pro-*

*perty* was left out because it was not usual among the Jews to claim servants as property at that time, or Jesus himself did not recognize servants as property.

Having proved that Jesus Christ taught nothing favouring slavery, I might now shew that he did teach doctrine directly repugnant to and incongruous with it. But my design at present is only to save from the slaveholder's misconstruction those portions of the scriptures which he might be inclined to produce in apology for his practice. Afterwards, when I shall have examined the remainder of the New Testament, I shall produce the scriptural testimony against slavery.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Acts ii. 18.

“And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit; and they shall prophesy.”

If by these “servants,” and “hand-maidens,” are to be understood *slaves*, then the text only confirms what God elsewhere teaches, that he is no respecter of persons, and that slaves are as much entitled to be ministers of the Gospel as any other people. But the passage of course cannot be quoted in vindication of slavery, and it is unnecessary to dwell upon it.

Acts x. 7.

“And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually.”

There is nothing in the text or the context to imply that the servants of Cornelius were slaves. On the contrary the very mission with which they were intrusted, and their association with the devout soldier, imply a familiarity and a confidence not ordinarily attached to a condition of slavery. Peter too treated them as his equals.

Acts xvi. 16—19.

“And it came to pass as we went to

prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us, and cried saying, These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place unto the rulers.”

Perhaps this was a slave. But let it be noticed she is not called a servant, although she had masters, whilst she calls Paul and Silas *servants* of the Most High God. I do not know that I am correct in supposing she might have been a slave; still I would concede it if it were claimed that she was. But if she was a slave, then Paul did not much regard the property relation of the masters, for he took the liberty, without the “masters’ consent,” to “destroy the hope of their gains,” a liberty

that was no more tolerated in Pagan Philippi, than it would now be in Christian (!) America.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EPISTLES.

Romans vi. 16—23.

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey : whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being thus made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh : for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield yourselves servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here the apostle, by a figure drawn from the condition of servants, elucidates his subject. He speaks of *servants* becoming *free*. He was, too, addressing the church at Rome, a city where slavery existed in all its enormity, and with all its legal sanctions. Did he, in this figure mean *slaves*, when he said *servants*? He did not. For although he speaks of being "made free," yet he distinctly shows that he did not have slaves in his mind, inasmuch as he asks "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Thus having reference to the pay the servant receives for his services; and yet more distinctly he says, "The wages of sin is death." Therefore, it was not *slaves* he had in his mind, but *servants*, who served for *wages*. And this is the



more to be noticed because, in the next two chapters he changes the figure, and making allusion to a condition of bondage, and to being "sold under sin," and in "captivity to the law of sin," and to being "delivered from the bondage of corruption," he nevertheless does not employ the term "*servant*" to represent such a state of "bondage" and "captivity."

Romans xiv. 4.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

Did the apostle intend to liken the people of God to *slaves*? Assuredly not. But in this reference to a servant and a master, he evidently meant a condition corresponding with the relation subsisting between Christians and Jesus Christ. And he employs a word which Greek readers know applies to house servants.

1 Corinthians vii. 20—22.

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called,

*being* a servant? Care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free use *it* rather. For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called *being* free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

The apostle here exhorts the Christian to *abide* in his *calling*. This evidently implies a power to change his calling if he had a mind to. But if the servant were a *slave*, he could have no choice in the matter. Besides slavery can hardly be said to be a man's *calling*—"Art thou called, *being* a servant? care not for it." Abide in your calling. But if you are able to be or to become free, then do not go into service, for in that case freedom is to be chosen. This I take to be the true meaning of the apostle. He was addressing different classes of Christians at Corinth. He says to the unmarried, it is better that you remain single, unless remaining single would be a temptation to sin; to the wife or husband, do not leave your hus-

band or wife; but if your unbelieving husband or wife depart, let him or her depart, for a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases; to the circumcised, he says, don't become uncircumcised; and to the uncircumcised, don't become circumcised; to the freeman he says, don't become a servant, and to the servant he says, *abide* in your *calling*. He was addressing classes who evidently had a choice of action. And he reminds them that they are all Christ's freemen, although they are his servants, and as Christ has bought them, (that is, with his blood,) whatsoever might be their condition in life, they are not to be the servants of men. They must all act in their various callings and conditions with entire regard to their free devotion to Christ's service. All this advice is so distinctly inapplicable to slaves, that it is surprising the passage should ever be referred to in justification of slavery.

How absurd it would be for a Southern minister to say to John, a slave, when he unites with the church, Now John, don't quit being a slave, but abide in that "call-

ing!" Such advice would be ridiculous, for in the first place, John never was called into slavery, but was forced into it, and in the next place, he can have no choice whether to abide in service or not. He continues a slave at the will of his master. I have no hesitation, therefore, in saying that slaves were not in the apostle's mind in thus addressing the Christians at Corinth. It is true, he says, "Ye are bought with a price," but from whom did Christ buy them? Evidently from themselves, for their allegiance to him was a perfectly voluntary one, and he recognizes them as freemen whilst he calls them servants. I really do not know how this conclusion can be avoided, viz: that the servants addressed were not slaves.

Corinthians ix. 19. 2 Corinthians iv. 5.

"For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Paul certainly did not make himself a

slave. He indeed alludes to a reward for his services, evidently having in his mind a servant entitled to wages.

Galatians iv. 1—7.

“Now I say, *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all ; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world : But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son : and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Assuredly a child differs very widely in his condition and liabilities from a *slave*. The apostle therefore did not mean a slave, but a servant entitled to certain rights, such as a son under age would be entitled

to. Although in bondage, it is an allusion to such a "bondage" as was admissible under the Mosaic law, as is evident from the apostle's reference to the custom of redeeming servants.

Ephesians vi. 5—9.

"Servants be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men ; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening ; knowing that your master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with him."

I do not apprehend that the persons here addressed were slaves, because it implies too much freedom of action to be consistent with the idea of slavery. It is true, the term "bond" is employed in the

eighth verse, but all servants are more or less bound or in bonds. Even the wife and the husband are represented by the apostle as in bondage to one another, (see 1 Cor. vii. 15.) so that the use of the term "bond" or "free," by no means indicates the existence of slavery.

Paul evidently, in his exhortation to servants to be obedient to their masters, designs that they should have regard to their obligations to Christ. Why are they to fear and tremble? It was not on account of disobedience to their masters, lest they might be punished, but they were to fear and tremble in the act of obedience itself, lest they violate their obligations to Christ. They were not to serve as men-pleasers, but they were to do the will of God with singleness of heart. But in doing thus they might offend their masters; therefore Paul encourages them to expect, nevertheless, a reward from God for any good thing they might do, for God would make no distinction, whether they were servants or masters. And then he immediately says to their masters "Do the same things unto them." What things? Why, to act

towards them with fear and trembling in singleness of heart, as unto Christ, and as themselves the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. They must also forbear threatening, remembering there is no respect of persons with God.

Now if all this does not place master and servant on an equality, I cannot think what language could do it better. It is utterly incompatible with the idea of slavery, and to my mind it is a powerful text against all slaveholding.

Phillippians ii. 7.

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,” &c.

Did Christ take the form of a slave? Surely the idea must be abhorrent to every Christian heart. The form of a slave is that of a crouching servile. But Jesus ever appeared manly, bold, and independent. A servant he was, and he humbled himself even to wash the feet of those who acknowledged themselves *his* servants. But Jesus never bore the form of a *slave*.



Col. iii. 22—25. iv. 1.

“Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.”

The servants addressed were not slaves; because the exhortation obliges them to please God rather than man. They were to obey their masters, but it was to be in the fear of God, not man. And if in doing this they should suffer loss on earth, they would receive the reward of the inheritance hereafter, for they serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong, either servant or master, shall receive from God for the wrong that he hath

done ; and there is no respect of persons. The Apostle then addresses himself directly to the masters, and enjoins them to give unto their servants that which is just and equal. Does not this imply that they were to receive wages ? It so seems to me. Give them what they are justly entitled to for their services, and furthermore give them equality. And to enforce this, he reminds them that they also had a master in heaven. As much as though he had said, as Christ your master serves you, putting you on an equality with himself, insomuch that he even washed his disciples' feet, so do you regard your servants equal with you. What can be more opposite to slavery than this ?

1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

“ Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed

And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren ; but rather do them service,

because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

It is evident that the "servants under the yoke," whatsoever this meant, did not have Christian masters, for certainly there could be no fear that Christian masters would blaspheme the name of God and his doctrine, because their servants might not honour them. This consideration itself ought to be enough to settle the question whether these masters were Christians or infidels. Paul says, Let *as many* servants as are *under the yoke*, that is, Let all the servants in the church, actually under the government of their masters, count their own masters worthy of all honour. And why? Because, if they do not, their masters will blaspheme the name of God and his doctrine. But Christians would not blaspheme; consequently the masters of the servants "under the yoke," must have been unbelievers or Pagans. The deduction is clear, that Christians did not have servants under the yoke.

But Paul then addresses Timothy concerning another class of servants. What

class was this? Mark, Paul did not say in the first instance, Let as many servants as have unbelieving masters, &c., but he left it to be inferred that they were unbelieving masters from the condition of the servants themselves; they were under the yoke. What then was the other class of servants? Why, those that have believing masters. But were these under the yoke also? If so, why address them thus? Had he not already said that *as many* as were under the yoke should count their own masters worthy of all honour, and did not this include the masters of all those under the yoke? If it did, then why after telling them to honour their masters, add that they must not despise them? This would be entirely superfluous. But the plain simple inference is, that this other class of servants were not under the yoke, and this is left to be understood by the mere consideration that they had believing masters. And they, says he, that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, that is, because their masters are their brethren, and consequently have not authority over

them like other masters have over their servants; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved brethren who are the partakers of the benefit of that service, and not like masters who have to be treated as though they were worthy of all honour to prevent them from blaspheming the name of God and his doctrine.

But some have said that the Apostle designed in the first verse to impress the duty of those under the yoke of Pagan masters to honour them from the consideration that unbelievers might blaspheme the name of God and his doctrine; but that the servants under the yoke of Christian masters ought to honour their masters from another consideration. The answer to this is that if such had been the intention of the Apostle, he would have said, Let as many servants as are under the yoke of unbelievers count, &c. But as the text actually reads, it is clear to my own mind that being the servants of "believing masters" is distinctly the antithesis of being the servants "under the yoke."

I really do not know that the Apostle

could have more plainly and more distinctly set it forth that no Christian held his servants under the yoke ; unless he had anticipated that at some subsequent period it would be said slaveholders were members in good fellowship in the primitive churches. But really I presume it never entered into the mind of the Apostle that the day would come when men would be quoting his letters to sustain slavery.

Titus ii. 9, 10.

“ *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things* ; not answering again ; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

There is nothing in this to imply that the servants to be exhorted were slaves. Servants who are not slaves are certainly more liable to “answering again” than slaves are ; and they certainly ought to guard against unfaithfulness and purloining, the more because they receive an equivalent for their services.

## Philemon 10—19.

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds; which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever: not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.”

Let the following circumstances be kept in view, and the idea that Onesimus was a slave will at once disappear.

1. Onesimus instead of avoiding detection as a runaway slave, puts himself directly in the way of Paul, an acquaintance and friend of Philemon, and was attending Paul's meetings long enough to be converted under his ministry.

2. Paul in writing to Philemon, clearly signifies that Onesimus had been only temporarily in the service of Philemon. He says, "Perhaps he departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever." The word "forever" implies that as matters stood before, he was not always to have had Onesimus, but now he may expect to have him permanently, not indeed as a servant, but as a "brother."

3. Paul counts himself a partner of Philemon, and urges him to receive Onesimus in the same capacity, just as he would receive Paul himself.

4. Onesimus was in Philemon's debt, and Paul offered to pay the amount for him. And this probably was the true reason of his leaving Philemon.

5. There is reason to suppose that Onesimus was a brother "in the flesh" to Philemon (verse 16.)



6. The letter evidently implies a doubt whether Philemon might not possibly refuse to receive Onesimus again; and Paul relies exclusively upon Philemon's Christian spirit, not to secure Onesimus from punishment, but to make sure of his reception

7. Onesimus was subsequently a delegate with Tychicus to the Colossian church, bearing a letter from Paul.

8. Philemon had no legal right to demand Onesimus, for Paul says he could have kept him in his own service if he had had a mind to do so.

These reasons are to my mind conclusive that Onesimus was not a slave; nor is there a particle of evidence that he was ever held in any such relation.

1 Peter ii. 18—20.

“Servants *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory *is it*, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take

it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”

Did it fall in with the plan of this work, I would shew that the word translated “*take it patiently*,” really signifies to *remain under* or *wait*. I would also shew that the word translated “servants,” has reference to those about the house and family, and could not properly apply to the field slaves of the American plantations. And that Peter had his mind upon house servants without reference to their being slaves is the conclusion which I think justifiable both by the original language and the analysis of the text.—The original word is actually translated “household servants,” in Acts x. 7.

This exhortation is more suitable to a class of servants who were responsible moral agents, than to slaves under the entire dictum of a master. I judge so, because reference is had directly to the fact of suffering grief for conscience sake, that is, for obeying God rather than man. The advocate of slaveholding lays emphasis upon the word “subject,” and thus mis-

takes the meaning of the passage; whereas the emphatic words are "with all fear." Fear of whom? Not of the master, but of God. The master indeed might call upon them to do something contrary to their Christian profession; therefore they must be subject to them with all fear of offending God, in obedience as well as disobedience. And as they would be more likely to act righteously when subject to the good and gentle, than when subject to the froward; for the gentle and good master would be more apt to make proper allowances for conscientious objection to any unchristianly service, whilst a servant under the fear of a froward master, would be under temptation to neglect his Christian duties; therefore Peter exhorts servants to be subject to their masters "with all fear," that is, the fear of God, and particularly if their masters are froward, and likely to buffet them when they have regard to their Christian obligations; as if he said, Now don't be impatient under such circumstances, for you will receive your reward from God. You do what is right; you may suffer through man's passions, but nevertheless

your well-doing will be acceptable with God. The encouragement to *endure grief* implies that they could extricate themselves from subjection had they a mind to do so. And he supposes some committing faults, buffeted for it, and taking it patiently, that is, remaining under their master ; and he reminds them there is no glory in patience in such a case, because they are conscious of deserving punishment ; but should they suffer for doing right, and then take that suffering or buffeting patiently, and continue in the service of their masters, they thereby become thank-worthy with their masters, and this patience is acceptable with God. In the succeeding verses the apostle enforces this, by reminding these servants that Jesus Christ, “when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ;” but this certainly would not apply very well to a slave, because a slave would not dare to revile or threaten. A servant of more independent condition might retort, and threaten to leave his master ; but the apostle advises against this course, because it would show more the spirit of the unregenerate heart, than of the true Christian.

It is no objection to this view of the subject, that buffeting was the punishment inflicted ; for that, except in the American states, has been by no means confined to slaves. Other servants have likewise been liable to blows. And with all the liberty had in our Northern states, I have known the servant buffeted by the overbearing employer.

But supposing Peter had slaves in his mind when writing this exhortation, there still would be nothing in the language to imply the rightfulness of slavery, so that the slaveholder would gain nothing by such a signification of the word "servants." On the contrary, it would be an encouragement to the slave to disregard the will of his master, when violating the law of God. And if slaves should once be impressed with this obligation in its full force, the authority of masters would not be worth much very long.

---

I have thus gone through the New Testament, and have not found a single instance of the use of the word *servant*

clearly and certainly applicable to the condition of slaves. In one place the idea of obligatory service is implied, but then in order to an understanding of it in that sense, the apostle found it requisite to add the qualifying terms "under the yoke." But after all, although many have conceded it, I am by no means certain that even the expression "under the yoke," indicates necessarily a condition of slavery. It might mean servants bound for a limited period, and by voluntary contract. The learned Gill intimates this, although by no means addicted, in his Commentary, to favour an anti-slavery view of the apostolic addresses to servants. That it sometimes means a voluntary service is evident from our Saviour's words, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me : for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." And indeed, there are some who think that Paul, when he says "servants under the yoke," means the yoke of Christ; as though he said, "Let as many servants as are Christians," &c. I would not, how-

ever, contest this point, but only name it to show upon what slight ground the advocate of slavery rests his argument. It is sufficient for me that he cannot *prove* that slaveholding is recognized in the text, and as it is the only passage in all the New Testament that seems to imply that slaves were in the church, and that if they were slaves thus addressed, it only goes to make the argument stronger against slavery, inasmuch as the whole passage clearly proves that *slaveholders* were not in the church; I feel perfectly safe in denying that either Christ or his disciples ever gave their sanction to slaveholding, or even *tolerated* it for one moment.

But it is generally supposed that masters and slaves were in the church, because slavery was a very common condition in the Roman empire. I do not, however, admit this inference. I very much doubt, whether, among the converts to Christianity in the apostolic day, there were many slaveholders. That none were members of the churches I feel assured, from the argument I have already presented; so that if any slaveholders were converted



to Christianity, they at once released their authority over their slaves, as such. They could not, indeed, legally emancipate them, because to do this they had to go through the forms of Pagan laws, that acknowledged a plurality of Gods, which a Christian certainly could not do. But really I do not suppose that enough slaveholders could have been converted at that early day to form much of a class, in the churches, for the plain reason that the early converts were not likely to be men of wealth, and therefore were not owners of slaves. Again I infer that those even who were wealthy, necessarily became poor when they became Christians, because persecution and the circumstances of the times must have drawn largely upon the resources of the early converts. And I perceive that the apostle, in calling upon Gentile Christians to contribute for the relief of the poor saints in Jerusalem, says that every man must lay by him in store, on the first day of the week, as God had prospered him, thereby implying that they had to earn what they made. And he expressly enjoined the members of the Thes-



salonian church to work with their own hands. (1 Thess. iv. 11.)

But I would particularly direct the attention of the reader to the denunciation of the rich by James, in his epistle v. 4; "Behold the hire of your labourers which have reaped down your fields; which is of you kept back by fraud." Were these rich men slaveholders, and was it because they employed slave labour that James denounced them? If so, then the whole question is settled, and no man has a right to employ slave labour, but it is the duty of the master to pay those who work for him. But if these defrauded labourers were not slaves, then how happened it, that these rich men had to *hire* labourers to reap down their fields? The inference is obvious, that although slavery did exist in the Roman empire, yet it did not follow that there were many slaveholders. I therefore insist it is not probable that any considerable number of slaveholders were, in the apostolic day, converted to Christianity. Even at this day, in the strongest slave states, there are very few owners of slaves, compared with the great mass of

professed Christians. And many, very many churches in the Southern states of this Union have no slaveholders. There are churches indeed, in the strongest slave counties or districts, in which are neither slaveholders nor slaves. In the state of South Carolina there is a larger slave than free population. Taking one of the most populous denominations in that state, numbering about forty thousand members, it is not probable there are more than two thousand slaveholders among them. But if in the nineteenth century, in a country where Christianity is the prevailing religion, where it takes but little or no sacrifice to bear the Christian name, there are so few slaveholders in the most popular denomination, of the strongest slave state, is it all probable that in Pagan Rome, in the very commencement of the Christian era, with only a church here and there, and the members thereof suffering every sort of persecution, there could have been many slaveholders converted to the Christian faith? It seems to me, it must take a wide stretch of imagination to suppose such a state of things. I am therefore

compelled to infer, both from the nature of things, and the writings of the apostles themselves, that slaveholders were not in the churches.

But I also doubt whether there were many slaves in the visible membership of the churches, and for this reason: Pagan masters were not likely to allow their slaves to attend Christian places of worship. Servants under a limited bondage, or "under the yoke," by contract with their employers, might have had enough liberty to unite themselves with the churches. But it seems to me not at all likely that slaves, in the absolute sense of chattelship, could have, without great secrecy, identified themselves with any organized Christian body. Therefore, taking all things into consideration, the only satisfaction I can arrive at is, that the servants addressed by the apostles were not slaves; and if slaves can now find in the apostolic writings any thing appropriate to their condition, it is not because they are specifically addressed, but because some of the same principles are suitable for them, that were adapted to the classes addressed.

But whether I am correct in this inference or not, it will not affect the validity of the construction I have given to the specific texts upon which I have commented. I present this view only to meet the contrary inference of the defender of slavery. It is certainly, to my own mind, a much greater probability that there were few slaves in the churches, than that there were many. If I felt at liberty to refer to common history, I would show that at a subsequent period, when slaves united with the churches, they expected the churches to purchase their freedom out of the church funds. But as I have thus far confined myself to the sacred writers themselves, I shall not now avail myself of any aid from other writings.

It has been unfortunate for the cause of liberty that the Bible was translated by uninspired men; and also that generally those who have commented upon the scriptures, have been in the midst of influences favourable to slavery. I have no doubt that a more faithful translation could be made, and which would take away any seeming recognition of slavery as a

legitimate institution. But taking the translation just as we have it, the slaveholder is, even in that case, left without ground to stand upon. He may deceive himself by an interpretation dictated rather by the customs of society, and the practice of his life, than by the strict principles of truth ; but no unbiassed mind, after a laborious, intelligent investigation of the Bible, for the purpose of ascertaining just the mind of God, can come to any satisfactory conclusion that God sanctions slaveholding. And when slavery is properly defined, as a condition in which one is in the power of another whom he is compelled to serve, without the means of redress when wronged, it becomes easy to see that no where does the Bible give countenance to such a condition.

It is not being a servant, it is not bondage, it is not even hereditary bondage, it is not being "under the yoke," that constitutes slavery, for these conditions may exist without oppression ; but it is that condition of servitude which is in itself oppression. One may be said to be oppressed with poverty, or hunger, or pain,

or some physical evil, or some mental affliction, none of which would be slavery, because he does not serve these things. But if he be under the control of bad passions and wicked lusts, he is a *slave* to his passions and lusts, because he serves them, and because the service is itself an oppressive one. So if one man is oppressed by another, as by slander, or contemptuous treatment, &c., he may, nevertheless, not be a slave, because he is not compelled to serve him or to obey his commands. But if one in the service of another is obliged to submit to wrong, then he is a slave. If it be the case of an apprentice, or a son, or a wife, or the subject of a king, it is only different forms or modifications of the same thing. It is slavery. But where there is no oppression, there is no slavery; and if the Southern planter can show that his labourers are not in an oppressed condition then are they not slaves. It will not do for him to admit that they are in an oppressed condition, and then claim that he is not their oppressor; for they are in *his* service, they are under *his* authority, and whether he be benefitted by their ser-

vices or not, so long as he retains them in their oppressed condition he is their oppressor. His fellow citizens may, by their legislation, oppress his servants, but that doesn't make them slaves, for they are not in the service of his fellow citizens, they are in his service, and under his personal authority, and it is his holding them under that oppressive legislation that makes them slaves. No law on earth can compel a man to hold the relation of master. He can declare them free from his authority. He is bound by every moral obligation to refuse to be the agent of oppressive laws. Nor has he any right to excuse himself by saying that if he should not be the agent of holding his fellow men in an oppressed condition, they would fall into the hands of others who would perhaps make their condition still more oppressive. He has no right to do evil that good may come. "Keep thyself pure," is the mandate of the Most High. If it is in his power, it is his high obligation to place these oppressed ones beyond the reach of oppression, and unredressive wrong. If it be not, then let the responsibility of their enslavement

rest upon those who may have the hardihood to assume it. His righteous example will be invaluable, and will do more in its operation upon other minds to alleviate the condition of their slaves, than the good he could possibly effect by retaining the legal relation of a master.

I would press upon slaveholders the criminality of continuing the relation they now sustain to those who reap down their fields, and whose rightful hire is kept back by fraud, "for the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." "My brethren have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." In holding the poor labourer in slavery, the charge is justly brought against you, that "Ye have despised the poor." "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin," James ii. 9. Are you not then committing sin, in subjecting men because they are poor, or because they are black, or because their fathers have been ever oppressed, to continued and perpetual slavery? But not only so, will you continue to abuse the Holy Bible



by making it subserve such an oppressive and soul-crushing system of human chattelism? Peter prophesied about false teachers, who "through covetousness," "with feigned words," would "make merchandize" of the brethren. It is now literally fulfilled in those who employ the Bible to uphold the traffic in man. But brethren the day will come when Babylon shall fall, and they who have traded with her in "the bodies and souls of men," shall stand "afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Before you fall in her doom, look again at that Bible you are thus in your self-delusion desecrating, and see what it says against all such wrong and oppression.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF SLAVERY WITH  
THE LAWS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT.

SLAVERY being defined to be a condition in which one is compelled to serve another without the means of redress when wronged, it would seem to be superfluous to attempt to shew that the Bible condemns slavery. Nevertheless it may be profitable to see in what terms the inspired books express God's mind in reference to it.

God, when he created man, enstamped upon him his own image. He endowed him with an intellectual and moral nature, with a capacity for mental and moral progress. To fetter man's mind as slavery does, is therefore rebellion against God. It is man's prerogative to have *dominion*, because he has an intelligent and a moral mind unlike the rest of God's visible creation. God gives him "dominion over

the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." But slavery takes this dominion from him, and in making him a chattel deposes him from the authority to which nature has entitled him. He subdues the earth, but his master takes the products; he conquers the horse, but he ploughs him for his master; not an ox, not a fowl, not a sparrow, not a reptile, can he call his own but by sufferance of his master. Has God justified this usurpation? Never! for God is no "respector of persons." If he has endowed the white skinned Franklin with a capacity to catch the lightning and enchain it, he has thereby forbid his fellow man to fetter the mind or the limbs of his genius. No less does he command that the dark-skinned Ethiopian be left at liberty to compete with Franklin or with Newton. If governments must be instituted among men, it is for the protection of the individual's liberty, and not for its restraint. It is to prevent his abuse of it, to the injury of others, but never to limit it. This is God's prerogative, not man's.

And what has God taught in his awful judgment against the earth in the days of Noah, but that man must not violate the rights of his fellow man? Is it too much to say, that slavery was the specific cause of the deluge? "The earth was filled with violence." What does this mean, if it be not man's struggles for dominion, the one over the other? This was the great wickedness that brought the waters of the flood to sweep away human life.

And what a lesson did God teach man by the four hundred years captivity of Judah and his brethren and their posterity, in consequence of their laying violent hands upon their brother and selling him into slavery? With the measure they meted, it was more than measured to them again. They said themselves, "Therefore is this distress come upon us." But neither had the Egyptians a right to enslave even those who had been guilty of enslaving their brother. And mark how God visited Pharaoh and his host with his mighty judgments, and how he overwhelmed them in the sea. And when Israel forgot that they were once in the

house of bondage, and in their forgetfulness of God used oppression, and exercised robbery, and vexed the poor and needy; yea, "oppressed the stranger wrongfully," then did God in his judgment deliver them into captivity to the wicked Babylonians, until the Babylonians in their turn suffered themselves what they had meted to the Jews. And thus does all history prove how God will deal with those who enslave their fellow men.

But let us turn to the law as given by Moses, and see there God's condemnation of slavery.

"And shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxii. 21.)

"Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxiii. 9.)

What is the meaning of this? The Jews were strangers in Egypt, and were there enslaved; let them remember this and how God delivered them, and let them not now make slaves of strangers.

But there was a law in direct terms forbidding the enslavement of man, and all slaveholding.

“He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” (Exodus xxi. 16.)

Again we find this law :

“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee : he shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best : thou shalt not oppress him.” (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.)

If a master should undertake to treat his servant as a slave, he might leave him, and go to another, and no man was allowed to deliver him back to his master, whatever may have been the conditions of the service. The escape was itself evidence that the servant felt himself oppressed, and then every other house was to be his refuge and his castle.

And further to guard the children of Israel from being stolen and sold to a strange nation, this law was also enacted :

“If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him or selleth him, then that thief shall die, and thou shalt put evil away from among you.” (Deuteronomy xxiv. 7.)

How could laws be framed more explicitly against slavery? Nevertheless the Jews, departing from the laws of Moses, did oppress and enslave their brethren; and in the time of Nehemiah we find him rebuking the nobles and the rulers in this language: “We after our ability, have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us?” “It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?”

In the days of Jeremiah also, the Jews were denounced by him for forcing their servants to serve them after their legal term of service had expired. “Therefore thus saith the Lord: ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his

neighbour: behold I proclaim a liberty for you saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." (Jer. xxxiv. 17.)

Surely these things testify plainly God's hatred of slavery. "To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the RIGHT OF A MAN before the face of the Most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not." (Lamentations iii. 34, 35, 36.) He that "hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence," "he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him." (Ezekiel xviii. 12, 13.)

And what is slavery but a system of violence and oppression? Yes, it must be said of any slaveholding nation, as Ezekiel said of the Jews, "The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully." (Ezek. xxii. 29.)

"Thus saith the Lord God: Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel, remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment



and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord God.” (Ezek. xiv. 9.)

I cannot look at the denunciations of the Old Testament against those who oppress the poor, without quaking for my country.

Is it not literally true that in this country the language applies that Joel employed against those who enslaved his people, “They have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink?” Here is the traffic in human flesh and bones and life, and ever and anon for the support of their extravagance, the dissipated, the gambler, and the debauchee, may and do under our system of laws give a boy for a harlot, and sell a girl for wine; and professing Christians uphold this system of blood by themselves selling and buying and holding slaves. But mark what the Lord said by Joel, “Behold I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head; and I will sell your sons and your daughters.” (Joel iii. 3—8.)

Will it not be in exact accordance with God's plan of retribution heretofore to make the posterity of those who now are slaves in this land the masters, and our sons and daughters the slaves? But I trust in God my brethren will see their wrong and their danger in time to repent of the one and avert the other; and by breaking every yoke, and letting the oppressed go free, as God has commanded by Isaiah, make those who otherwise would be their enemies, their friends and their brothers.

It is your sin, fellow citizens, as it was the sin of Israel, to "turn aside the poor in the gate from their right." (Amos v. 12.) But "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn; and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes and sell the refuse of the wheat? The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of

Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? (Amos viii. 4—8.) “Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his.” (Habakkuk ii. 6.) “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages and giveth him not for his work.” (Jer. xxii. 13. “Rob not the poor because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.” (Prov. xiv. 31.)

I need not multiply these expressions of God’s wrath against those who crush down the rights of the poor, and live upon oppression. It is slavery that is thus denounced, and the Old Testament abounds in the strongest expressions of God’s indignation at any system, by which the brotherhood of man is disregarded, and the poor are kept poor by the oppressions of the wealthy and the powerful.

## CHAPTER X.

THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF SLAVERY WITH  
THE PRINCIPLES AND PRECEPTS OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT.

WE have seen how decidedly and strongly the Old Testament writers denounce slavery. Let us now look into the New Testament and learn what that requires of Christians in relation to it.

Matthew ix. 10. Luke iv. 8.

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.”

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

The service of God must be without rivalry. No authority is allowable between the authority of God and the obedience of his creature. No man must therefore be placed in a situation where he would be required to obey man rather

than God. But this is the slave's condition, for in the first place to keep up the authority of the master it is requisite that the mind of the slave be restrained from intellectual cultivation beyond a certain point, he therefore cannot learn what God requires of him and cannot improve the capacity for serving God ; and in the next place he cannot carry out the convictions of his own conscience as to the service he owes, unless those convictions accord with his master's judgment, and his consent be given to his slave to practice agreeably to his convictions. The rights of conscience and of private judgment are as indisputably appropriate to the servant as to the master. No man, therefore, can properly enter into any service of another man which to perform may require a neglect of any conscientious convictions of duty. But if no man have a right to place himself in such a condition, no other man has a right to force him into it. No man therefore can rightfully hold another man in the condition of a slave, for if the latter be at liberty to follow out the convictions of his own conscience, he is not a slave, because

this alone is true liberty. It is consequently impossible both to be a slave, and to carry out the injunction "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve."

Matthew vii. 12.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

This text is so exceedingly pertinent to the question at issue, that anti-slavery writers have for the most part been satisfied to rest their argument upon the strength of it alone. Yet pro-slavery men have with great dexterity evaded its force, to their own satisfaction, but not to the satisfaction of those whose minds are not under the influence of the "peculiar institution." They interpret it thus, (and I will state it as strongly for them as I can):—All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you if you were in their circumstances, do ye even so to them, yet without affecting the subsisting relation between the parties. They apply it thus: The master

is to treat his slave as he would wish to be treated as a slave if he were one. But let us test the correctness of this construction. I am taken prisoner by a Pirate. He is about to take my life. But suddenly it occurs to his mind that he ought to do to me as he would have me to do to him if our relative positions were changed. He therefore spares my life and treats me very kindly as a prisoner, but he retains me in captivity. I say to him, The rule that governs you in your treatment of me as your prisoner, ought also to release me from captivity. Not so, is his reply. It is not intended to affect in the slightest degree the relation subsisting between us. Does not every one perceive at once the absurdity of such a construction? Had the pirate been governed by the rule before he captured me, even according to his own interpretation of it, I would not have been his prisoner, for he could not capture me without thereby changing the relation between us. And yet after having violated his own rule in taking my liberty, the same rule does not require him to restore it to me! But our Saviour meant

no such nonsense. He evidently gave the precept for the purpose of securing to every man his right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It was designed to impress the doctrine of human equality. It is to be taken literally, just as our Saviour has expressed it.

But says one in reply to this, A man may desire another to do for him an ungodly act, and is he in that case bound by the Saviour's precept to do the same act for another?

But such is not a supposable case. For he who desires another to do for him an ungodly act, has already violated in his heart the laws of God, and cannot be supposed to be under their influence. The golden precept is nothing to such a man, because he has by his own violation of righteous and just principles placed it out of his power to fulfil the law of duty either to his God or his neighbour. He must first recal his ungodly desires, before he can be prepared to make his desires the standard of his duties to his fellow men.

I once wrote in reply to President Wayland on this precept, when I was myself



in the blindness of a slaveholder, as follows: "Now doubtless the servant who waits at Dr. Wayland's table, would like to have half of the doctor's salary, rather than to be compelled to work, and as the Doctor himself, were he a servant, would probably like to be elevated also, so upon his interpretation of the golden rule, it becomes his duty to share his salary with his waiter." But when I used this argument, it did not occur to me that the servant was interdicted all covetousness, and that the desire to have half President Wayland's salary would itself be unlawful.

I also added, "But probably if Dr. Wayland were a slave, he would be pleased to have the President of Brown University to purchase his freedom, and as it is probable some of our slaves would also be pleased' to enjoy such liberty at the hands of the Doctor, upon his principles it is his duty to purchase them and set them free." But this too was said without considering that such a desire on the part of the slave would be itself an infraction of the law which says "Thou shalt not covet." The desire of freedom on the part

of the slave is a lawful desire, because freedom being his right, it is not coveting his master's property to desire his liberation. He only seeks that which he is strictly entitled to as a man. But when he seeks his freedom through the loss of those who place no restraint upon his liberty, he then covets his neighbour's goods. And no one has a right to make such violations of the divine law the basis of his duties to his fellow men.

I now see no difficulty in taking our Saviour's words literally—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." And the master should reason thus: If I were a slave, it seems to me it would be reasonable and just that, as I have never consented to serve him who is called my master, and have been guilty of no crime to sentence me to such punishment, my master should acknowledge my right to freedom, and not make me suffer for his own imprudence, if not sin, in buying what no one had a moral right to sell. What then is my duty as a master? As I would have an-

other do to me so must I do to my slave. I therefore am bound by the law of Christ to recognize his rights and set him free.

It is utterly impossible to hold a slave without violating this precept. Some, indeed, say a slave may be legally held in that condition for his own benefit, and then his bondage would be justifiable by the Golden Rule.

But those who say so are unconscious of what the precept requires of them, and how impossible it is to retain a man in slavery for his own benefit. Let any man try it with this precept of Jesus Christ ever before his eyes, and with the fixed purpose to regard his slave's interests as his own, and he will find that nothing short of an entire emancipation will satisfy his anxious and sincere heart.

Matthew xx. 25—28. Mark x. 42—45. Luke  
xxii. 25—27.

“But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among

you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant ; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

“ But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them ; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so it shall not be among you : but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister : And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

“ And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. For

whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.”

If this be not plainly, clearly, and distinctly a command to Christians not to exercise dominion and authority over men, I do not know how it is possible to express it more distinctly. It is a very common sentiment that Jesus Christ did not directly interfere with existing civil institutions. How such a sentiment ever obtained credit in the face of such language as this, I cannot conceive. Jesus Christ was charged by the Jews with teaching doctrines subversive of Cæsar's government. He never denied it. And well may the Jews have so charged him, when he uttered such a precept to his followers as the above. Here it is distinctly set forth, that “dominion” over men was an example set by the Gentiles not to be imitated. And if any shall desire to be great, or to exercise authority, he is to control that unhallowed disposition; and instead of ruling, he is to be the waiter, and instead of exercising authority he is to be the servant. It is not that

no one is to wait, and no one is to serve, but that the ministering and the service should be voluntary, just as Christ volunteered to minister and to serve. He even stooped to wash his disciples' feet, and yet he willingly allowed a woman to wash his feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hair of her head. O, how beautiful this is ! How can one look at the Saviour's precept, and his example, and then exercise irresponsible authority, or "lord it" over his fellow man !

Matthew xxiii. 10—12.

"Neither be ye called master : for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant, And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

The master here meant, is a conductor, leader, or guide. The one who follows his directions, is an attendant, waiter, or minister. He attends, waits, or ministers under the direction of the conductor, leader, or guide. The one is called the master, the other, the servant. Now Christ for-

bids this guidance of another man, this leading, this control over him. Nay, if he who would control be the greatest, he is the very one to humble himself and wait upon the other. If any man can hold a slave, and carry out this precept in practice, it seems to me he can accomplish more than a miracle. He can master impossibilities.

There is a very self-complacent way some have, of circumventing such self-denying precepts as the one under consideration, by inferring that Jesus was giving instructions how matters should be conducted in the church. And they separate the spiritual kingdom of Christ from all secular concerns. But this is all man's own invention. Christ lived in the world, and taught how men should live in the world. He never said that Christians must act one way in the church, and another way in the world. That they might be great men and masters in secular affairs, but they were to be humble men and servants in the church. But what he said was that they were by love to serve one another, and live as brethren. They must

not be called masters, any further than they might, as occasion offered, call those who now serve them, masters. He expressly forbid the exercise of all lordship, and the terms master and servant must therefore go no farther than to signify the brotherly employer and the employed, the guide and the attendant, mutually serving each other according to the necessities of each. The teaching of Christ is not a mere collection of abstract principles to gradually and insidiously undermine an existing state of things, but it is directly to the point as nearly as the language he spoke in could express it, and for saying such things openly and without fear they crucified him. "Be ye not called masters," said he. Surely this was plain. "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Is not this plain? What do you want more explicit than this? If you have great talents, great advantages, great wealth, great any thing, what is required of you, but that on account of these very things, you are to be the greatest servant, and to minister more than any other in the service of your less favoured



brethren? Why! the doctrine lays the axe at the very root of all slaveholding, and that in the broad face of day, so that the very simplest mind ought to understand it. Yea, it takes ingenuity to evade it.

Luke iv. 18.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

This was Jesus Christ's emphatic text. He had only to read it, and without comment. And then he sat down and designated himself as the one in whom the scripture was fulfilled. They understood the meaning of it. It was plain enough for those who loved to exercise authority. It filled them with wrath, and they rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, to cast him down headlong, which they certainly would have done but for his escaping their hands.

Jesus Christ thus expressed the full purpose of his preaching. It was, among other things, "deliverance to the captives," "to set at liberty them that are bruised;" and that there might be no mistake about it, he adds, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Now, what was that acceptable year of the Lord, but the year of jubilee? A year in which *all the inhabitants of Israel* were to be proclaimed *free*. But, says the pro-slavery advocate, This was only figurative,—it is to be taken spiritually,—it is the soul's captivity that is meant, and deliverance from the bonds of Satan. Indeed! then it appears that Jesus Christ spoke more plainly against existing civil institutions than he meant? He does not then lay down a general principle to undermine gradually the civil polity, but if his words are to be taken in their literal sense, it would break slavery up, root and branch, at once! But to my mind, Jesus Christ meant just what he said. He came "to preach the gospel to the poor." Is that figurative? Surely there is no figure of speech there. "To heal the broken hearted." Will you figure

that away too? Recovering of sight to the blind—did 'nt he do it literally? When he made the blind man to see, was it figurative sight? Why then, call the residue of the text figurative? Jesus Christ tells us plainly, distinctly, and unequivocally, that the object of his mission was the deliverance of the captives, the liberty of the bruised, the acceptable year of the Lord. The Jewish rulers wished to take his life for it, and modern pro-slavery men say, O, he did 'nt mean just as he said; Jesus gave his sanction to slaveholding. Nay, says some learned professor, he did 'nt sanction slaveholding, but he was silent on the subject, lest he might excite the prejudices of slaveholders against Christianity, although he meant gradually to undermine the institution. Ah! brethren, take Jesus Christ's own words, and you will find them plain enough to trouble your conscience in keeping a slave under your dominion a single hour. I believe from my very soul, that Jesus Christ meant it was a shame and a sin to keep a man in slavery. And he meant it to be understood that slaveholding was incompatible

with Christianity. If therefore, emancipation be a gradual work, it is gradual only because it is difficult to work Christianity into the hearts and the practice of mankind. No man *fully* imbued with "the Spirit of the Lord," would own a slave. How much a man may practice a wrong and yet be a Christian, must be decided by Him who looks into the hearts of men; I dare not say. But this I dare to say, and I feel authorized to say it in the name of Jesus Christ—that it is the duty of the Christian to give deliverance to the captives. He must confront Christ himself if he do not, and tell him he did not think Christ meant exactly what he said. Jesus Christ is full of compassion, and may forgive the most grievous wrong; but I should not like to trust myself, in such an important matter, to an interpretation that turns from their direct signification the words of Jesus Christ.

Luke xii. 37.

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird

himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”

Here Jesus represents the master waiting upon his servants, girded himself like a servant, while they sit down to meat. How much does this look like slavery? The same spirit which breathed through all the Saviour's words the equality of the human family is in this text most beautifully portrayed.

Acts xvii. 26.

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”

This establishes a common brotherhood in the whole human family; and was spoken by the Apostle in a connection to indicate that all mankind were equally entitled to “life, and breath, and all things.”

1 Cor. v. 11. vi. 10.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or

an extortioner : with such a one no not to eat.”

“Nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

To *extort* is to *draw by force*. It is to take from another by violent means. This is the distinct import, both of the original Greek word and of our English translation. I leave it to the conscience to decide whether the gains of slaveholding be not the fruits of extortion. It is obtaining by force from another what that other produces by his labour or his skill. If then extortion be condemned by Paul, slaveholding necessarily is condemned.

2 Cor. xi. 20.

“For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.”

Here is an exact picture of the slaveholder and the man who is forced to be a servant. His service is forced by his master, his corn is devoured by his master, his master takes from him what he produces, his master exalts himself over him, his

master smites him. Paul says if any of these things come upon you, "*ye suffer.*" Does he not thereby condemn slavery?

Col. iii. 11.

"There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ is all and in all."

In the "new man," in the Christian, are none of these distinctions recognized. — Christians are not to make distinctions between brethren of different nations, or of different conditions. Masters and servants are to be on an equality. If one serve another, it must not make him any less than his master, and if one be a master it must not make him any higher than the servant. They are all brethren; and therefore, (the inference is obvious) none can be slaves and none can be slaveholders under Apostolic authority.

Hebrews xiii. 3.

"Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them."

Whatever may have been the condition

of those to whom the writer in this case had special reference, he lays down a general law subject to no exceptions whatsoever. Christians are to remember *all* whose *liberty* is taken from them, with a sympathizing feeling, as though they themselves were in the same bonds. Consequently they are to remember *slaves* as though they were themselves slaves. Let all Christians feel this, and there would soon be no question about slaveholders in the church. Every master converted to Christianity would speedily snap the bonds of his slaves, and they would serve him only as free men may serve a master.

Timothy i. 10.

“Men stealers.”

This is the translation of that word which Paul employs to signify a class of sinners against whom the divine law applies. Who are these men stealers? None will deny that those are included in this term who kidnap men and use them as slaves, or sell them as such. Were it not on account of unlearned persons who may be giving me their attention, I would prove



that the Greek word positively means slaveholders, slave buyers, and slave sellers, as well as kidnappers. But taking the translation as it is, I think I can satisfy any candid man that they are involved in the crime of man stealing who have slaves in their possession.

Paul was speaking of the law as having been made for men stealers. Where is the record of that law? It is in Exodus xxi. 16—and in these words: “He that steal-eth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.”

Here it will be perceived that it was a crime to sell the man for which the seller must suffer death. But it was no less a crime to hold him as a slave, for this also was punishable with death. It does not appear that the act of stealing the man was punishable with death, but the selling him or the holding him was the punishable crime. A man may be kidnapped out of slavery into freedom. There was no law against that. And why? Because kidnapping a slave and placing him in a condition of freedom, was only to restore

him to his lost rights. But if the man who takes him become a slaveholder or a slave seller, then he is a criminal liable to the penalty of death.

Perhaps some will say that this law was only applicable to the first holder of the slave, that is, the original kidnapper, but not to his successor who might have purchased or inherited him. But what is kidnapping? Suppose I propose to a neighbour to give him a certain sum of money if he will steal a white child in Carolina and deliver him to me. He steals him, I pay him the money upon his delivering the child to me. Is it not my act as fully as his? Am I not also the thief? But does it alter the case whether I agree beforehand or not to pay him for the child? He steals him and then sells him to me. He is found by his parents in my hands. Will it avail me to say I purchased him and paid my money for him? Will it not be asked, Do you not know that a white person is not merchantable? And shall I not have to pay the damage for detaining that child in my service as a slave? Assuredly not only in the eye of the law,

but in the judgment of the whole community I would be regarded a criminal. So when one man steals another and offers him for sale, no one in view of the divine law can buy him, for the reason that the divine law forbids that man shall in the first place be made a merchantable article. The inquiry must be, how did you come by that man? You may catch a wild horse or steal away from its dam a young wild colt, and appropriate it to yourself or sell it. There is no law against that; but how do you get the man to sell? Now if I buy under such circumstances, I buy in violation of the divine law, and it will not do for me to plead that I bought him. I have him in possession, and that's enough. God condemns me for it as a man stealer. My having him in possession is evidence against me, and the Mosaic law says if he be found in my hands, I must die.

Now then, when Paul said the law was made for men stealers, was it not also saying the law is made for slaveholders? I am not intending to apply this term in a harsh spirit. But I am bound as I fear

God, to speak what I am satisfied is the true meaning of the Apostle. And I am satisfied that the Apostle meant to include all who were in any way accessory to slavery, either by kidnapping, buying, selling or holding men forcibly in bondage.



## CHAPTER XI.

### SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES.

HAVING as I believe fully proved in the first place, that God never, either in the Old or New Testament, tolerated slavery, as I have defined it; and secondly, that he positively condemned it; I shall now proceed to shew that those who are held in bondage in the Southern States of America are the subjects of a cruel and oppressive system.

Let me repeat my definition of slavery.

*Slavery is a condition in which one is in the power of another whom he is compelled to serve, without the means of redress when wronged.*

Southern writers say that those circumstances that are adduced as oppressions

and cruelties in slavery are the "*abuses* of slavery." But I contend that these things are essential elements of slavery. If I have a proper understanding of the use of language, I should say that to abuse any thing is to detract from its use, i. e. to weaken it. If I abuse my liberty, and become licentious, I am losing my liberty and becoming a slave to my lusts. If I abuse my purity I am becoming impure; to abuse my honesty is to become dishonest. So to abuse slavery is to destroy slavery. But is it not so that the more you oppress a man the greater slave he is? This oppression therefore is not the abuse of slavery, it is the abuse of liberty, it detracts more and more from the man's liberty, and involves him deeper and deeper in slavery. Now, how comes it to pass that the more a man is oppressed the greater slave he is, if oppression be not an essential element of slavery? Take away all oppression, and what then? The man may not be out of bondage, but he is no longer a slave. Freed from oppression, he is freed from slavery. If he remain in bondage, it is for his own benefit. He has

his means of redress should he suffer wrong, and his master is bound as well as himself. He has all the liberty he wants, and he remains in bondage because it is for his own happiness. It would be folly to call such a condition slavery.

The slaveholder holds his slave by a legal tenure. He could not retain the man in servitude if the civil law and its administrators did not guard and defend his claim. The laws of the country determine the extent of the master's claims, and limit the extent of the servant's powers accordingly. To the laws, therefore, must we resort to ascertain the real condition of the servant. If they give the servant power of prosecution and means of redress, when imposed upon by the master and others, there is no slavery in the case. But if they do not, and the master have the power to compel service in his own way, just as he might an ox or a mule, the man is oppressed by the very law that places him in that condition.

What then, is the law of American slavery? The law of South Carolina defines slavery thus:—

“Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, and reputed to be chattels, personal, in the hands of their owners and possessors, their executors, administrators or assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever.”

Does not any one see at a glance that a man or woman subjected to the operation of such a law, must be in an oppressed condition? The man who is too blind to see this is not fit to be reasoned with. Here is the essential element of slavery; a condition in which one is in the complete and entire possession and power of a master, just like a horse or a cow. Yet this is the law under which professed believers in the Bible are holding their fellow men in bondage. But why was this, and similar laws in other states enacted? Evidently, because it was found essential to slavery. Let the law now be repealed, and another passed, in these words:—“Slaves shall not hereafter be deemed, sold, taken, and reputed to be chattels,” and what then becomes of the slaveholder’s claims? He has none. His servant is no longer a slave. No longer a chattel,

he is no longer a slave. He cannot be sold. What then is he worth? Nothing, in the market. He cannot be transmitted to heirs; he is not a chattel—he is now a man, with a will and a purpose of his own.

Thus the very basis upon which slavery is erected, is a law that places men in the condition of cattle, “to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever.” Can any one, in the face of this law, say slavery is not oppressive? Gracious God, have mercy upon the man whose heart is so hard, that he cannot feel for a servant in such a condition!

But to make the bondman as powerless as possible, he is not permitted to give testimony, or to enter a suit in law or equity, either for himself, or his wife, or children. Why such laws, if they be not essential to slavery?

These two things, defining the slave to be a chattel, and debarring him from entering a suit in law or equity, to recover damages from his master, or to secure his wife and children from wrong and injury, are all sufficient to prove the oppressive



character of slavery. And as such laws are absolutely indispensable to the system, it follows that oppression is its essential element.

But let us draw up a catalogue of some of those things, that some might be pleased to call the "abuses of slavery."

1. Punishments, of kind and degree at the option of the master.

2. Delegated powers to agents and overseers, who may be cruel and heartless men.

3. No legal rights of property.

4. Liability to be sold at the option of the master.

5. Liability to be sold for the master's debts.

6. No right of redemption.

7. No choice of masters.

8. No recovery of damages if injured, either by others, or by their masters.

9. No power of making contracts.

10. Subject to descend by inheritance to persons of the most cruel and despotic dispositions.

11. Kept in ignorance.

12. No legal marriages.

13. No parental authority.

14. Wives and husbands, parents and infants, liable to sudden and forcible separations.

But I need not go on. All these are oppressive ; and many, many more things could be detailed. Can slavery exist, and these be removed ? No ; they must necessarily continue while slavery continues. Remove them by law, and slavery is abolished : there is nothing of it. If you remove these oppressive items gradually, you are gradually abolishing slavery. But at the same time you run the risk by the removal of any one of them, of rapidly destroying the whole system. To keep them strictly as chattels, is the only safety for the system. Wheresoever slaves are obtaining some partial advantges, they are becoming less and less valuable, as slaves. As for instance, in some of the states there is no law to interdict their being taught to read. In those states the slaves are more enlightened than in others, and the consequence is they are much less submissive. You must, if you would perpetuate slavery, take care that your slaves be tho-

roughly slaves. A half way between slavery and freedom will not answer. A little liberty gives an ambition for more, and those are the most dangerous slaves who approach nearest to the condition of freemen. Hence we may lay it down as a principle—there must be oppression, or there cannot be slavery.

There may be, in different countries, different modes of securing the power of the master. But every where, to make or keep a man a slave, there must be oppression. In our country there is, probably, the most systematic legalized oppression that is to be found in any slave code in the world. Here, probably, the slave is more powerless than any where else, because the masters have the greatest power. And I lay down this proposition, that slavery in the United States is particularly abhorrent to God, not only because it is a system of oppression, but because it is at variance with the principles of the American people, as published to the world. The American people have themselves declared to the world what they consider to be oppression. It is to be with-

out a free system of laws ; under an arbitrary government ; without naturalization ; without a free administration of justice ; without trade ; being taxed without consent ; deprived of the benefits of a trial by jury, and under the power of another people. Such is oppression—oppression so weighty, so galling, as to demand, for deliverance, the solemn pledge of life and fortune and sacred honour. This definition of oppression they have hanging up in their public houses, and in many private dwellings, and in all their halls of legislation. They teach it to their children, and the people assemble together on a particular day every year to hear it read.

But what is the condition of the African race in this country ? They are without legislative or judicial power ; without commercial privileges ; they are taxed without their consent ; they are not allowed trial by jury ; they are subjected to the most arbitrary and tyrannical laws. And is not all this found essential to slavery ? But it was on account of these very things, yet in a very small degree realized, that

the American people declared themselves independent of Great Britain, and to this day they justify with loud acclamation the acts of their fathers, whose blood attested to the sincerity of their professions. Out of their own mouths, therefore, are the people of this country condemned as oppressors of the coloured race. I do not here point to cruel masters, and their stocks, their irons, their manacles; these are incidents that the so-called "kind master" may condemn as well as myself. But I point to those things that are applicable to all, and are therefore the very characteristics of slavery. And is not all of it but one continued, interminable system of wrong, outrage, and grievous oppression? How can you, if you have any conscience at all, come to any other conclusion? And if it be so, is not the proposition demonstrated, that slavery in these United States is abhorrent to God, because it is a system of oppression, the masters themselves being judges?

What does God say? "He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches shall surely come to want." "He that

despiseth the gain of oppression—he shall dwell on high.” “He shall break in pieces the oppressor.” “Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.”

Thus, in the most burning language, does Jehovah express his holy indignation and righteous anger against oppression. And if those who serve their Southern masters are not an oppressed people, in the name of God I ask, what is, what can be oppression? It is impossible to oppress the black man, if he is not already oppressed. Carry the system farther—try to make it more oppressive, and you are weakening the ability of the slave to accomplish his work, and destroying the institution by tightening its cords beyond their capacity of tension. Be more oppressive, and your oppressions will soon send your slaves “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; where the prisoners rest together, and hear not the voice of the oppressor,” and

“where the servant is free from his master.”

Now, ye men of conscience, (and it is only to such I would address myself,) is not the demonstration clear?

The Bible condemns all oppression. American slavery is systematically oppressive, as essential to its existence. Therefore the Bible condemns American slavery.

And now, what is left for an honest Christian man to do? Can he now, with the Bible before him claim his fellow man as his slave, and that too under a code of laws revolting to humanity, and reeking with blood? No, no.—If any man have a heart to feel, or a conscience to judge, he will, he must, so far as his authority and legal power extend, “break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.”

## CHAPTER XII.

## REMINISCENCES OF SLAVERY.

IN order to show the practical effects of the slave system, I shall here add a few facts that have occurred within the circle of my own acquaintances. I could give the names, but withhold them for obvious reasons.

## CASE 1.

The slaves of a distinguished Minister of the South, were seen by a gentleman, who named it to me, landing from a boat on a Sabbath morning with their little stores for market, which they had produced in the intervals between their regular labouring hours, or had saved out of their weekly provision, and which for want of other opportunity, they had to dispose of on the Sabbath. My informant also learned upon inquiry, that they had brought from the plantation some articles



for their master, such as butter, eggs, vegetables, &c. ; and that it was not unusual for them to come into town thus on the Sabbath. I introduce this case as one of not unfrequent occurrence among the planters of the South ; but more especially because the master of these slaves has borne a conspicuous part in defending the institution of slavery, and has made direct reference to the deep interest he has himself taken in the spiritual welfare of his slaves.

#### CASE 2.

A Deacon in a Baptist church was exhorting his brethren and sisters in the church on one occasion, when he used this language—"My brethren, man is bad, he is worse than the devil, he is bad as a nigger." This case goes to shew with what contempt the slaves are regarded, when a member of a church could use such language without rebuke ; yet I can testify that this same deacon was comparatively very kind and indulgent to his slaves.

## CASE 3.

Isaac, a slave, on a Sabbath afternoon, visited a near neighbour's farm. The patrol found him there without a ticket from his master. They took off his jacket and gave him a severe flogging. Such cases, however, are very common; and especially on the Sabbath. The patrols are composed of church members as well as others.

## CASE 4.

An eminent Baptist minister of the South sold a slave, and used the money to defray his expenses to attend a meeting of the Missionary Board at the North!

## CASE 5.

A prominent Southern minister when invited to the pastoral charge of a leading church in a Northern city, brought with him a slave and retained her in his service, after selling her children to a planter in Georgia.

## CASE 6.

Some slaves of a distinguished politi-

cian of South Carolina, were seen with irons upon them working in the field. Their master has publicly defended slavery as a Bible institution, and as a blessing to the slave. He has referred to his own slaves as very comfortably situated.

#### CASE 7.

A member of a Baptist church had large irons welded on the ankles of his slaves, which to be taken off, had to be struck forcibly with a sledge hammer. Doubtless many persons will appropriate this case to themselves, and each will suppose I mean him particularly.

#### CASE 8.

Riding in the field of Deacon —— one day, where his slaves were picking cotton, I heard him say to them, both men and women, “Any one that does not have seventy pounds picked to day, I shall give seventy lashes.”

#### CASE 9.

A very pious and amiable young lady who felt deeply in view of the ignorance

and degradation of the slaves, undertook to teach those on her father's plantation to read. Her father was a Deacon in a Baptist church. Discouraged by her father, and threatened by others, she had finally to desist.

#### CASE 10.

Mr. Y—— a Baptist preacher, was besought by his slave man to sell him to Mr. C——, that he might accompany his wife to a distant region of country. Mr. Y—— could be brought to no terms. His slave however, accompanied his wife a few miles when she started, intending to return. His master pursued him. Mr. C—— offered to purchase him. Mr. Y—— replied that he would “see them both in hell first.” He was tried by the church for his profane language, but the church did not attempt to rebuke him or even question him about refusing to let the husband go with his wife, or to accommodate the matter to prevent a separation. I myself was the Moderator on the trial.

## CASE 11.

A slave woman was brought before the church for trial on account of pregnancy. But she escaped censure because she testified that her master met her in the field and forced her. There was no law to protect her.

## CASE 12.

The slave man of Mr. P——, an infidel, came before the Baptist church to unite therewith. The church was satisfied with his Christian experience and character, and he would have been received for baptism; but he had no ticket from his master. His master had threatened him with two hundred lashes if he should be baptized. He desired, however, the baptism, with the design of keeping it concealed from his master. But the church would not thus receive him.

## CASE 13.

Sam, a slave, in consequence of severe treatment, ran away. When he was found and brought home, his master stripped him, cut off one of his ears, whipped him

on the bare back until it was laid open in deep gashes from the neck to the hip, and then applied pepper and salt to the wounds. For this there could be no redress by law. His master was in respectable society.

#### CASE 14.

A Deacon of a Baptist church ordered one of his slaves to submit himself to the lash; the slave ran from him; the Deacon shot at him and killed him. For this homicide, the master suffered neither from the laws of the State nor the discipline of the church. He was always esteemed one of the most respectable men in the community.

#### CASE 15.

Will, a slave about twenty years of age, was sold by a very prominent member of an Episcopal church to Mr. R——, as a punishment, Mr. R—— being known to be a severe man. Will, after being with his new master a short time, and suffering from harsh treatment, ran away. Mr. R—— pursued and overtook him at a ferry. The slave rather than be taken,

ran to the end of the ferry boat, sprang off and drowned himself.

#### CASE 16.

A gentleman moving in the very first society, and a valued member of an orthodox church, having the character of a very indulgent and kind master, on one occasion missed a number of turkeys that had been taken during the night from the poultry house. Supposing some one of his male slaves to be the robber, he ordered every man on his plantation to be whipped in order to extort a confession. After several of them had undergone the trial, it came to his coachman's turn. He trembled, and his agitation excited the suspicion of his master. He was whipped for some time, but made no confession. His master then had him placed in a sitting posture on the dirt floor of a negro cabin with his feet in the stocks. He was kept in this position a week, living upon spare diet. At last he confessed himself guilty of the theft; and was then released from the stocks. He some time afterwards declared to me most solemnly, that he had

nothing to do with the robbery, and made the confession only to save himself from further suffering. I learned upon inquiry that the robbery was perpetrated by a man who escaped punishment entirely.

#### CASE 17.

There is or was, in the city of Charleston, a house for the imprisonment of slaves. To this house masters and mistresses sent their offending slaves either to work on the tread-mill, or to be whipped. Passing through this house one morning, I saw a beautiful, light coloured female slave who was sent there for the purpose, tied up by the hands to a hook or ring in the ceiling, whilst her toes only touched the floor. She received upon her naked thighs many lashes with a large whip, whilst she cried for mercy with the most affecting appeals. But in vain. The lashes had been ordered, and she had to take them.

#### CASE 18.

The slaves of Mr. J. M——, a Methodist, reported that their master had kept a mouth lock on one of his female slaves



until her tongue had rotted off, and she died of mortification. Some of the neighbours examined the grave, and found the marks of the corpse confirming the truth of the report. A prosecution was attempted, but the testimony of negroes not being admissible, the guilty master could not be reached.

#### CASE 19.

A slave named Will, about forty-five years of age, was sold away from his wife and children, about fifty miles, to a young Baptist minister. Will soon after ran away to go to see his family. He returned in a few days. His master gave him fifty lashes on the bare back, and the next day preached to, and communed with the church. He spoke openly to members of the church of what he had done. No one uttered a syllable of disapprobation.

#### CASE 20.

Mr. —, a Baptist preacher, had a slave woman named Grace, whom he purchased from a distance, being separated from her husband. She ran away, and

tried to reach the neighbourhood where her family lived, but was taken up and lodged in jail. She was delivered of a child in the jail. Mr. — sold her in that situation to one of his neighbours. No one regarded him as having in any way acted amiss, either in purchasing or selling the woman.

#### CASE 21.

Deacon —, and Mr. G—, both members of the same church, could not agree upon terms by which a member of the same church belonging to the former, could retain his wife and children belonging to the latter, who was about to move away. Mr. G— took off the wife and her children fifty or sixty miles. The man was a remarkably tender and affectionate husband and father, and grieved much after the separation. He was encouraged to take another wife, and his master suffered him to do so. But he was not satisfied, and longed to see his wife and children—he accordingly ran away to seek them. On the way he was lodged in jail. His master had him whipped in the jail;

and when he was brought home, he was tried and excommunicated from the church for running away. The two masters received no expression of disapprobation from the church.

#### CASE 22.

Mrs. M. B—— kindly offered to the slaves in her neighbourhood, to read the Bible to them every Sabbath, and explain it as well as she could to their understanding. On one of these occasions, a slave of Mr. P—— was present. When he returned home, for attending the meeting, his master, who was a member of the Episcopal church, placed him in the stocks with his face downwards, and beat him with a paddle until he was too sore to sit.

#### CASE 23.

Mr. T—— used a paddle to chastise his slaves, with small auger holes bored through it. His plan was to keep the paddle in water, and when about to use it, it was first thrust into sand, and with the grains of sand adhering to it, the paddle was applied to the naked skin of the

slave. Mr. T—— was one of the most distinguished and respected men in his state. He was also a communicant in the Episcopal church.

#### CASE 24.

A highly respected member and deacon of a Baptist church, having lost some poultry, satisfied himself by the foot-prints that a certain slave was the robber; he gave him two hundred lashes heavily laid on with a large leather whip, on the naked skin. I myself witnessed it, and counted the strokes. No farther notice was taken of the affair. I name this case particularly, because the individual referred to was a man whose generally benevolent feelings and excellent spirit rendered him as little liable to perpetrate a cruel act, as either the reader or myself. It only shows what even a good man may be tempted to do when he has irresponsible power.

#### CASE 25.

A male slave, whom I shall designate as D——, formerly owned by a Baptist member, became subsequently the slave of a Methodist. Under his former master

he bore the character of a pious Methodist, and a good servant. According to D——'s story, his new master's negroes got into the habit of accusing him of things done by themselves, and for which his master chastised him so frequently that he ran away. He was in the woods four years. His place of concealment was at length betrayed by a negro. A white man accompanied by a negro, then went to take him and another runaway. They came upon the runaways in a hammock. D—— was asleep, but woke up on hearing the approach of the pursuers, and seizing a gun he had by him, prepared himself for resistance. The other runaway also was armed. The white man fired his gun at D——, and shot him in the foot or leg. D—— then fired, and shot the white man on the back of his head, and the negro who was with the white man, in the face. The latter, however, had first shot the other runaway, who died in eight days of the wound he received. The white man and his negro aid were severely hurt, but afterwards recovered. D—— was captured, tried, and hanged for mur-

der. I had this account from a deacon of a Baptist church, who was himself one of the freeholders who tried D——. He said he thought it a hard case, but he was bound to give a verdict according to law. The man was hanged on the margin of a baptismal spot. I saw the gallows myself.

#### CASE 26.

Mr. ——, an excommunicant of a Baptist church, whipped one of his slaves so severely, that not feeling able to work, he took to the woods, and after some time was found a putrid corpse.

#### CASE 27.

The wife of the last mentioned slave also ran away in consequence of severe treatment, and I have recently learned that she too died under the repeated severity of her master.

#### CASE 28.

A female slave left her infant in the shade of the fence whilst she was hoeing cotton ground; the cries of the infant induced her to leave her work to nurse it.

For this the overseer beat her to the ground, and whipped her so severely that she was very ill for some days. The woman was a Baptist, the overseer a Baptist, and the owner of the plantation a Baptist minister, all in the habit of sitting to the Lord's Supper in the same church. No notice was taken of the matter by the church, and there could be no redress by law.

## CASE 29.

Mrs. Mc—— killed several of her slaves by cruel punishments. There was never any legal investigation.

## CASE 30.

Mr. C——, after returning from church on Sabbath afternoon, tied up one of his slaves by the hands, the toes affording the only support ; and the body being exposed in a state of nudity to the mosquitoes all night, the slave was dead the next morning. There were no legal proceedings.

## CASE 31.

Mr. —— had a slave of very light com-

plexion, whom he took for his wife. She lived in his house as his wife, and had several children by him. The laws of the state forbid emancipation; she therefore was still legally his slave, although not treated as such. Her master, who in the sight of God was her husband, became involved in debt. His wife and children were levied on and sold to satisfy a claim. A physician, himself a prominent member of a Baptist church, and the son of a Baptist minister, purchased them, and the husband and father was not allowed to visit them on their master's plantation. The master continued a respected member of the church.

---

But I need not multiply this catalogue of crime; for it is not only revolting to my own feelings to write these things, and to the reader's to read them, but it matters not to the argument whether they occur frequently or not. Some of the cases I have named are ordinary transactions; and if they do not all occur frequently, it



is not because there is any thing in the laws to guard the slave from these wrongs; but because there is in the consciences and benevolence of masters that which restrains them from acts of violence and cruelty. It is sufficient that such things as I have related have been, and now can be perpetrated under the slave system without the penalties of law, nay, oftentimes with its very sanction, to make it evident that he who holds men as property by such legal tenure, is himself sustaining an oppressive government, and is therefore himself an oppressor. But every slaveholder who reads these pages, will be ready to admit, in his own conscience, that from the circle of *his* acquaintances also, he can recall to memory cases quite as bad as these I have here recorded, and many of them a vast deal more. No slaveholder, without doing violence to truth and his own conscience, can say I have here exaggerated any thing. I have referred only to my own acquaintances, and have purposely selected the cases of those who are highly respected in the social circle, and especially church members. If those I

have referred to particularly, and who will recognize their own cases although their names are suppressed, should be angry with me for thus making a record of them, their tempers will not be excited on account of any colouring I have given to the reality, but because I have spoken the plain, unvarnished truth. I hope none will regard me as stating "aught in malice." I have purposely avoided all figures of rhetoric, and written in the most simple and unadorned style, and have presented real facts, not to wound any one's feelings, but to show that slavery is practically, as well as legally an oppressive system.

Ye, who are called kind masters, and who claim that you have an affectionate regard for your slaves, to you I appeal. Have I not spoken the truth? You know I have. From mere visitors, the practical oppressions on your own plantations may be concealed, and travellers among you may infer that all is kind and pleasant between masters and slaves; but I, who have been one of you know better, and *you* know better; and *you* know too, that

your own hearts revolt oftentimes against what you feel yourself forced to do, to sustain your authority, and to keep your slaves in subjection.

Will you then still appeal to the Bible, that which you call God's Book, as your authority for continuing such a system of wrong and oppression? My heart throbs with anguish, my eyes are suffused with tears as I am writing this with my Bible before me. Did I too once desecrate that precious volume to such unhallowed use? I did; and I now confess it with bitter mortification. And when I see my brethren doing the same thing, I cannot be embittered against them; but I pity, I deplore their delusion. I feel that the Bible is converted into a bill of sale—the God of love is made to affix his signature; Jesus the Redeemer of men seals it with his blood; and the noble band of apostles are smiths to rivet the chains of the slave. But brethren, you are doing your own souls a grievous wrong, whilst thus you manacle your brother, and mutilate your Bible. *The Holy Bible was designed for man's redemption, not his enslavement.* Pre-

cious volume ! how many bruised hearts  
hast thou bound up ! how many dungeons  
hast thou illumined ! how many prison  
doors hast thou opened ! and how many  
captives hast thou restored to freedom and  
to God ! And wheresoever thou art al-  
lowed to enter the hut of the poor slave,  
his heart beats high for liberty, and his  
voice shouts aloud the song of deliver-  
ance !

THE END.

B  
RD-232















DOBBS BROS.  
LIBRARY BINDING

CT 79  
ST. AUGUSTINE

FLA.  
32084



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 898 996 A

